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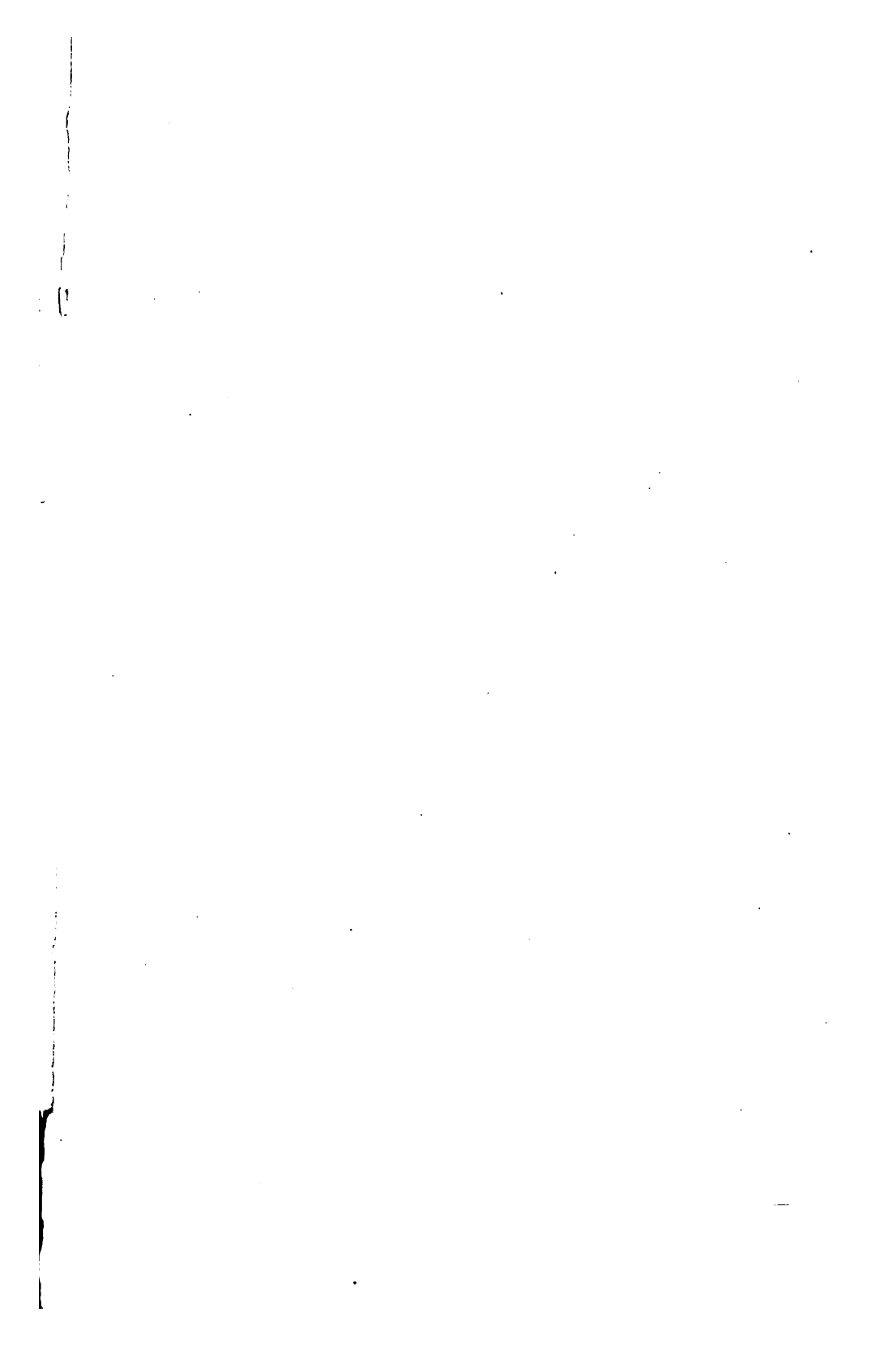
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ETHICS IN ACTION



Porfirio Diaz and His Work

BY

A SOLDIER OF THE OLD GUARD



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FIRST PART.

THE MAN.

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His excellency General Porfirio Díaz in full uniform

The above is a reproduction from an oil painting by Joaquin Romero, autor of the latests portraits of president Díaz. The cut gives and idea of the vigor an good health which the distinguished president enjoys, and which are well shown in the garb and imposing firmness of his attitude, traits well impressed on the canvas.

I.

HIS CALLING.

It is Our Duty to Obey the Dictates of Our Conscience.

Porfirio Diaz was very young, one might almost say a boy, when he terminated at the Seminary of the Holy Cross of Oaxaca his preparatory studies for the priestly career for which he was intended. He was then nineteen years old. His only guardian was the powerful Bishop, Don José Agustin Dominguez, who gave him the following advice:

"It is time that you were thinking of taking up your life-work," he said to him. "Next year you had better don the habit and adopt the tonsure of the church. . . ."

It is evident that the young scholar must have received these instructions with but little warmth, as the bishop found it necessary to support his orders with those wordly arguments, which he considered both attractive and decisive, such as the advantages from a social point of view and the wealth which at that time was the heritage of the clergy.

Porfirio Diaz was accustomed to obey his superiors, and as at that time his conscience was not awake to the future, he respected the decisions of his guardian, and humbly accepted his orders, awaiting without conviction or enthusiasm the career which was before him.

During the vacation of that year, 1849, and whilst waiting for the time when he was to receive his priestly orders, Porfirio Diaz commenced the study of Theology and at the same time gave lessons in Latin so as to help himself and his old mother, who was very poor. One of the pupils in the Latin class of the budding young priest, was a son of Licenciado Don Marcos Perez, a confirmed liberal, an intimate friend of Juarez and a Professor of the Institute of Science and Arts of Oaxaca.

At that time the Seminary in which Porfirio Diaz commenced his studies and the Institute in which Juarez made his graduation and in which Diaz also finished, were symbolic of the two political ideals then agitating our country. At the Institute the principles of liberty of thought and conscience, equality before the law, fraternity, tolerance, order and industry were inculcated. At the Seminary entirely different ideas prevailed,

such as intolerance, class distinctions and an absolute subjection of thought and of conscience to a blind and unreasoning faith.

One little occurrence, insignificant in itself, was sufficient to change the destinies of Porfirio. Don Manuel Perez invited him to the distribution of prizes which was about to be made among the students of the Institute, and on this occasion introduced him to Juarez, who was Governor of the State. The frank and open character of the democratic Indian enchanted the young seminarist, accustomed as he had been until then to the despotism of his superiors, the haughty clergy of the Seminary, to whom one had to speak in the most humble fashion.

At the same time the speeches which Porfirio heard at the prize giving, awoke his conscience and showed him the true path which he ought to follow in accordance with his ideas. The struggle which took place within his young soul must have been tremendous. On one side was the will of those to whom he owed everything, as well as wealth and power, and on the other an easy conscience and the satisfaction which results from following sincerely and honestly one's ideas of what is good and noble.

Porfirio did not hesitate overmuch. He could not follow the ecclesiastical career, seeing that he did not feel it to be his calling. He could not be a bad priest. He, therefore, worthily chose an honest life of poverty. However, even though his decision was final, he did not carry it through, as may readily be understood, without passing through a terrible struggle with himself, which kept him awake during the memorable night of the prize-giving at the Oaxaca Institute.

There was good reason for this, as at the age of nineteen it is a very serious affair to change one's plans in life, slight and disobey a powerful guardian and break a promise, even though that promise might have been given as a compliance. Moreover, the matrons of Oaxaca in that period, looked upon it as their supreme ambition to have a son in the priesthood, and it hurt Porfirio to have to destroy the illusions of his cherished and exemplary mother.

As was only natural and right, she was the first one to be consulted. She was terribly upset, believing that her son had strayed away and was lost. Seeing this, Porfirio had not the strength to resist her tears, and offered to do whatever she wished; but his wise and unselfish mother controlled her feelings and made them subordinate to her duty in recognizing the rights of her son and his tendencies. All she did was to point out to him the consequences of such a decision, among these being the grave one of losing the privilege of obtaining the

coveted scholarship of Saint Bartholomew, which was highly esteemed, and the chaplaincy which had been offered to him, all of which would mean a terrible disappointment to her. However she urged him not to mistake his calling, so as to avoid the danger of becoming an unworthy priest, and of her own accord she undertook the difficult task of informing Bishop Dominguez of the decision of the ex-seminarist. This is a wonderful instance of that maternal influence which guides the destinies of men. This explains why the dutiful son of Doña Petrona Mori de Diaz has always been a slave to duty.

Upon being informed of this decision the Bishop showed the greatest indignation and treated him with the utmost severity, demanding the return of his books and at the same time withdrawing all his support. In a wise and prudent manner the mother of the courageous and loyal young man gave him her advice, but without opposing his decision as to his vocation. The young fellow, whose strength of character had hardly commenced to show itself, bravely took all the consequences and resisted everything which was against his convictions and his beliefs. Later on he was to give his own blood in their defence.

This was the first step on the road to fame and glory.

It is not within the power of all men to achieve these heights; but, by listening to the dictates of conscience, it is possible to obtain, without fail, peace of conscience and the respect and esteem of society.

II.

SELF-HELP.

Manual Labour is Honourable.

If many of the young men who wander tattered, ragged and hungry in the streets, without a profession or calling, were asked what was the cause which had led up to their present misfortunes, they would invariably reply that owing to lack of money and assistance, they were forced to abandon their studies or give up some scientific career, and, as they imagined it was degrading to do manual work, they could not find any means of earning a living.

This is all very well. But the man who has made our country powerful, wealthy and contented, and who is spoken of as a friend, to whom all attention and honours are paid by the most powerful monarchs of the world, whilst studying hard and obtaining honourable degrees in all his examinations, in his youth was accustomed to give his spare hours to the performance of humble duties, so as to provide for the necessities of his family and for himself.

As a student, Porfirio Diaz was in such extreme poverty, that during the time that he was studying logic, an Oaxaca business man, who was interested in the energy and application shown by the young man, gave him his text book and "barragana," or long cape, which was worn in that time by the day students of the Seminary.

The assistance of Don Joaquin Vasconcelos, which was the name of this merchant, originated on account of Porfirio's conscientiousness and love for work. Vasconcelos used to give Mrs. Mori and her daughters such work as the making of shirts and shawl embroidery. This aroused in the mind of the needy young student the idea of helping his family, and he applied to Don Joaquin for a position as employe in one of his stores. The merchant made enquiries and found out that the willing young man was worthy of assistance and ought not to abandon the Alma Mater for the counter, especially when he was already graduating in Logic with noteworthy success.

Porfirio saw that shoes for himself and his family were too expensive for their restricted circumstances, and decided to

make them himself. Without delay he applied himself to find out how Nicolás Arpide, a shoemaker, carried on his trade. This man had his shop in front of the Institute, and he got from him the simple tools necessary, and with the aid of these he soon learnt how to provide himself and his family with shoes. Later on he taught himself how to make top boots and finely finished shoes.

Simple furniture, which he provided by learning something about carpentry, in the same way as he had learned to make shoes, came into use and he finally succeeded in making a fine set complete, and thus earned money, overcoming the great difficulties which beset his early youth.

If he lacked the means to buy the necessities of life, he certainly had not sufficient to buy luxuries, but the industrious and active man is rich wherever he may be and always accomplishes his desires.

From childhood Porfirio was ardently fond of hunting and all kinds of manly physical exercises. But a gun, or any other kind of weapon, however cheap it might be, was a luxury quite out of the reach of the poor student. However, he did not confine himself to the wish for one, but on the contrary proceeded to make a gun himself. An old and rusty musket barrel, the lock of a pistol and a wooden stock, were soon transformed by his patient and active fingers into a serviceable gun, armed with which he would sally forth into the country with pride and bring back game to replenish the scanty home larder. On these excursions he made acquaintances with other hunters, most of whom were Indians, for whom at times he would make simple furniture and at others repair their weapons, and in every case honestly earning money, thus making of his pastime a source of profit and experience instead of an expensive hobby as others would have done.

As Porfirio advanced and made progress in his studies, his industrious mind was able to apply them to the acquisition of better things. We have already seen him giving private classes in Latin. Later on he was librarian and student of Natural Law at the Institute of Sciences, where he was educated, and there completed his studies for the bar, for which he did not receive his degree, because Santa Anna, alarmed at the liberal tendencies of that establishment, suddenly and in the most arbitrary manner suppressed it. Porfirio was already obtaining good returns from his profession and had a paying clientele, but which he gave up, as we shall see further on, in order to devote himself body and soul to the cause of Reform.

Knowing these traits in the character of General Diaz, it is easy to understand that the man who could never be disheartened in the face of any difficulties in the earlier years of his

life, nor considered himself degraded by any honest work, was fully capable of overcoming those obstacles which opposed the prosperity of our country, and has known how to evolve out of little more than nothing, armies, equipment, money, railways and schools in the same way in which he made guns and shoes, by sheer force of work.

No one who follows this example within the limit of his abilities, will ever need to be a vagabond in the streets, clothed in rags and hungry, without knowing what to do to earn a living.

III.

THE DEFENCE OF THE FATHERLAND

**If it is Only to Maintain Our Independence
We Must Take up Arms.**

The news that the American invaders had advanced as far as the town of Teotitlan, and threatened to attack the capital of the State of Oaxaca, stirred up the citizens of Oaxaca and brought about the highest and noblest sentiments of civic feeling: intense love for a fatherland over-run by foreign enemies.

These events happened in 1846. Porfirio Diaz was then a boy of sixteen years of age, studying Logic in the Seminary of the Holy Cross. But it was quite sufficient for their professor, Father Macario Rodriguez, to speak to the students of their duties as Mexicans to defend the country against the invader, for these young souls to be fired with the idea of sacrificing themselves for the honour of their fatherland.

With Porfirio this feeling took a practical turn, imbued as he was with those ideas and emotions peculiar to great men. At that age and at such a momentous time, the future leader of men and the soldier who would carry before him the free and victorious flag of the Republic, showed himself.

Hardly had Professor Rodriguez finished his patriotic exhortation, when Porfirio at the head of his comrades approached Don Joaquin Guergue, the Governor of the State, offering his services and those of his schoolfellows.

These would-be defenders of their country were so young that Governor Guergue misunderstanding the noble and generous impulse which stirred them, asked the spokesman:

"What deviltry have you boys been up to?" and with this, he limited himself to taking a note of the names of the boys, without immediately accepting the offer they had made him. This offer, however, was accepted later on, and then it was that Porfirio, for the first time in his life, took up arms in the defence of his country, did his first guard duty, and submitted with promptness and attention to the hard rules of campaigning.

Once the danger of invasion had passed by, Porfirio again turned to his preparatory studies for the priesthood, and for the time being left a soldier's life behind him. Some years were yet to pass by before he should take up arms again and thus contribute to those many stirring pages of the history of the Reform epoch and that of the second Independence.

But whatever may have been the enemy against him, his ideal was always sublime: Liberty. His only and noble motive: Love for Mexico, and the cause he defended which was invariably just and honest.

In the military life of General Diaz it is impossible to find even a shadow of treachery, or the suspicion of weakness in his convictions, or the slightest hesitation in the face of a sacrifice.

In order to maintain the principles of the Reform, he left his family, his interests and his clients, in fact, in a word, everything. When the Reform triumphed and the then Colonel Diaz had a seat in Congress, he saw the Capital of the Republic threatened by the bands under the leadership of the infamous Marquez, and whilst the other deputies wasted their time in useless discussions on literary matters, Porfirio only made himself heard in order to ask permission to leave Congress and take up arms again, thus a few days later achieving the remarkable victory of Jalatlaco, which earned for him his promotion to the rank of Brigadier General.

Later on at the conclusion of the great siege of Puebla, the glory of which cannot be overestimated, Porfirio, a slave to discipline, gave himself up a prisoner, but declaring at the same time that he only did so from a sense of duty to orders and with the determination that as soon as he was able to escape he would again take up arms against the enemy. He eventually did escape and organized the defence of Oaxaca, and upon again being taken prisoner, warned the Count de Thum, his captor, that he would do well to watch him closely, because he intended to make his escape again, as he had done before, and would return to fight with his last breath.

Would that we were able to imitate this noble instance of patriotism; to defend our country to the death, should it some time be threatened by foreign invasion. But may we never have to take up arms to engage in civil wars. Let us have enough patriotism to sacrifice ourselves rather than turn our weapons against a countryman. Only by this means can we follow in the footsteps of this great citizen; only in this way shall we be able to maintain his great work and make ourselves worthy of it, and lastly by this line of action alone shall we merit the right to call ourselves Free Mexicans.

IV.

CIVIL BRAVERY.

**One's Opinions and Convictions Should Always be Openly Stated
and Maintained.**

At the end of the year 1854, the Dictator Santa Anna, whose rule was almost at an end, wishing to indefinitely prolong it, and counting upon the support of the army and the clergy, then closely allied and all powerful, called the people together to a comedy of a plebiscite, which was to be held on the first of December of that year.

The questions which they pretended were to be asked the people were these:

Should the present President of the Republic (Santa Anna), continue in supreme authority, possessed with the same ample powers and faculties with which he is now invested?

In case he did not continue in the exercise of these same ample faculties, to whom should he immediately turn over his powers?

As may be seen from the foregoing questions, Santa Anna was not satisfied with the mere fact of being re-elected, but also wished to exact a confirmation of the dictatorial power which up to then had been so seriously abused by him.

According to the circular in which the public was invited to vote, every one was able to do so without any restriction whatsoever of their will. But beforehand it was known that the tables where the votes were to be deposited would be surrounded by troops and artillery, and that all the different kinds of corporations, religious, military and civil would have to vote at the orders of their ruler, and finally, that those who dared to vote against him would pay for it, perhaps, with their lives or at least by being exiled.

Such audacity and cynicism made the young law student, Porfirio Diaz, highly indignant; and his right as a free man determined him to declare against the dictator, who already suspected him for some time past on account of the liberal ideas to which he had given frank and open expression.

At that time Porfirio was a professor of Natural Law at the Oaxaca Institute. In accordance with the circular relating to the plebiscite, the Director of the Institute had to vote for the staff of professors, sending in, of course, a number of votes equal to the number of professors, which constituted a most outrageous electoral fraud.

The day for the plebiscite, the first of December, 1854, arrived. The main plaza of Oaxaca was surrounded by troops with loaded muskets and a battery of artillery ready to open fire was also put in position. In the portals of the government palace a dias of red velvet had been erected, on which was a table covered with magnificent cloth of the same material, and around this were seated in many chairs, the high state officials,—the humble slaves of the dictator. On the table were laid the two books, one for the signatures of those voting in favour of Santa Anna, and the other for those who should have the temerity to vote against him.

When Porfirio took a seat near the table, in order to be a witness of that attempt against suffrage, the opposition book, as we may call it, was closed and its pages still untouched, because no one had the temerity to face the anger of the tyrant, as represented by his faithful attendants. Porfirio observed a dignified and reserved attitude.

"And you do not vote?" was asked him in a loud voice by a certain Licenciado Enciso, a fellow professor at the Institute.

Porfirio replied:

"One is not obliged to vote. It is a right.....I do not care to make use of it."

At this moment a shoemaker, who was also a detective, appeared upon the scene, and stated that he had with him thirty votes, all of the neighbours entitled to vote within a certain block of the city.

"From that number, then," said Porfirio, "you may strike out one name, because I am a neighbour of that block, and I have not voted nor have I authorized anyone to do so for me."

"Yes," replied the malicious Enciso, "those who are afraid do not vote."

Without answering one word, Porfirio walked calmly up to the table, took up the pen and opened the terrible opposition book, which up to this moment was still blank.

"Be careful, young man," said General Pinillos, the Governor of the State, to him in threatening tones, "no one has as yet written in that book."

The only answer Porfirio made was to write on the first blank page the name of the liberal revolutionary leader of the South, Don Juan Alvarez, and then signed below it. After

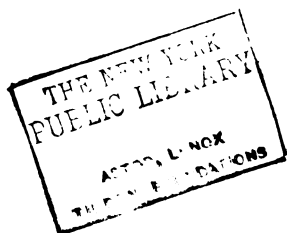
this a Mr. Ruiz, carried away by this manly example, voted for General Juan Bautista Ceballos, but was arrested when leaving the plaza, beaten and pressed into the army. Porfirio managed to escape, thanks to his alertness, and from that day on definitely took up arms in the defence of liberty. That atrocious government persecuted him actively, under the pretext that he had voted for a rebel whom he had treated with a title of honour.

Later on and under circumstances which were equally dangerous to him, placing his life in jeopardy, before Forey, before Bazaine and before the Count de Thum, Porfirio, a prisoner and unarmed, maintained with exactly the same civic courage his own convictions, and stated his intention to escape and fight with the last breath in his body for the independence of his country.

With equal energy and with the same sincerity we should always declare and maintain our opinions and beliefs, both in large as well as in small matters, if we wish to be worthy of the title of honest men and to hold the respect and esteem of society.



Church and convent of Santo Domingo at the city of Oaxaca. By the highness and thickenes of its walls it served many a time as fortress to the fighting troops in the epoch of the mexican revolutions. Notwithstading this, Porfirio Diaz being still a young man climbed them over in order to communicate with his profesor, Marcos Perez, who was a prisoner in the famous *Torrezilla* (little Tower) Behind the South tower of the church, the left one in the cut, and upon the vault of the church is the *Mazmorra* (cell) the elevation of which gives an idea of the energy of character of who, being a young man reached it in order to render service to the cause of Liberty.



V.

PHYSICAL EXERCISE.

To be Healthy and Strong in Mind we Must Also be Sound in Body.

General Diaz, speaking of his youth, once said: "I was always fond of athletic exercises. I came across a book on gymnastics, probably the first one to reach Oaxaca, from which I learned how to improvise a home gymnasium in which my brother and myself and several other friends who were fond of exercising, used to practice."

We believe that of these gentlemen the only one who is still living is Senator Carlos Sodi.

Undoubtedly these systematic courses of exercise were not sufficient to satisfy the young student's love of action because his deeds in the school factions then prevailing, are well known, as well as his hunting trips with that home made gun of his, and many other similar incidents of his school life.

Thanks to this healthy physical activity, his naturally strong constitution was further developed and strengthened, so that his dexterity, quickness and extraordinary powers of endurance are even to this day the admiration of the younger generation.

Hardened by long trips on foot in the sun, the rain and the wind, accustomed to live and sleep in the open air, to face danger and death with coolness, the young collegiate of sixteen years of age, who took up arms to defend his country against the Northern invaders, was, from a physical point of view, worth more than many of those "indoor" generals who at that time commanded the army.

In order to give the reader an idea of the courage, strength and daring of the young law student, who was then barely twenty-two years of age, we may repeat a story which he himself told some years later about one of his youthful adventures. The simple manner in which he recounted the incident contrasts notably with the dramatic nature of the affair itself, and the nobility of purpose which underlaid his actions.

"While I was studying law, a change in the national government occurred, due to the departure from the country of President Mariano Arista in January of 1853, and the success

of the revolution in Jalisco, together with the proclamation and return to power of General Santa Anna. The new government was entirely conservative and commenced to persecute the liberals.....This policy, my initiation to a military career some six years previously during the war with the United States, and my liberal ideas, made me decide to oppose the government of Santa Anna."

The military instruction which at that time was being given at the Institute, also had some influence in his choice of a career.

"I was in the confidence of my master, Don Marcos Perez, as to the revolutionary propaganda which he was starting in Oaxaca.....Revolutionary correspondence, written to him in cipher was found and Don Marcos was tried and thrown into prison. I had the opportunity of looking over the papers in connection with his trial and read the declarations of his comrades, all of which I decided to inform him of. With this idea in view, I undertook to scale the walls of the convent of Santo Domingo, where he was, with the aid of my brother.

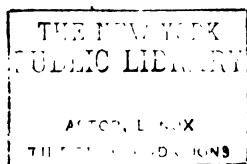
"Within these precincts was a special prison for friars, known as 'La Torrecilla' (the little tower), and there it was that Don Marcos was shut up. 'La Torrecilla' was about three metres long and two metres wide, with a door at one end and with a high window at one side, so that from the door everything that was going on inside could be seen. The roof was of very solid construction, and the window of 'La Torrecilla' which looked out on to the courtyard of the church sacristy, placed high up near the roof, was protected by heavy iron grating, but there was a space for one's feet on the window sill."

"The scaling of the convent walls was made easier for me by the practice which I had acquired in gymnastics, and also by the fact that I had my brother's help. Whenever we had to climb a height not exceeding three metres one of us would get on the other's shoulders, and, once on top, throw a rope to the one below, by which he also climbed up. When a greater height had to be scaled, we would throw the rope over one of the corners of the building, and then one of us would hold it while the other climbed up. The most difficult part of this task was to hold the rope, once one was up, while the other climbed up after him."

"We climbed in by the entrance to the convent which led to the open country, over the orchard wall, which was some four metres high, at about midnight. On the first night we let ourselves down into the orchard, in order to find out if there were sentinels stationed there or not. We then immediately climbed the wall again and, walking along it, reached the



General Felix Diaz. He was justly famed by his courage and energy, he won all the glories of his military career on the battlefield. He was a brother and companion of President Diaz, and was at his side in the assault of Santo Domingo, in the battle of the "Fifth of May" and in part of the glorious campaign of the third Army of Orient. Being Governor of Oaxaca, he adhered to the Noria plan, fought to maintain it and was victim of a political crime which aroused great indignation all through the country.



roof of the convent bakery. At that hour the bakers were at work, and as these men generally sing at their task, it was hardly likely that they would hear us."

"From the roof of the bakery we climbed on to that belonging to the kitchen, which was the highest wall we had to climb over. The cooks were sleeping.....From the roof of the kitchen we managed to climb without difficulty on each other's shoulders to the main and highest roof of the convent."

"When we reached this point it was necessary for us to go very carefully, because the place was full of sentinels. On the first night we had to wait before moving a step, till we heard their challenges, as this was the only means by which we could ascertain the points at which they were stationed."

"In order to facilitate our escape, in case we should be discovered, we took off a cord which was tied to one of the bells, and fastened it to a battlement overlooking the street so that we could make our escape, if necessary, by sliding down this rope, should we be surprised and other retreat cut off. Before lowering ourselves off the roof again, we replaced the bell rope. We were also provided with an iron grappling hook which could be tied to the end of a rope and used for any purpose."

"Reaching the main roof of the convent was the most difficult part of the whole operation, on account of the numerous sentinels who were posted there. Our progress was very slow indeed, because we were obliged to lie down, dressed as we were in grey clothes which we had put on so as not to be so conspicuous. In this position we listened for the challenge of the sentinels, which could be heard every fifteen minutes and by means of which we were able to locate their beats."

"In this way we reached the roof of 'La Torrecilla'; but, in order to escape the vigilance of the sentinel on duty, we were obliged to pick our way very quietly and cautiously. Once we were there, I either lowered myself, or supported my brother down to the window, where the one who had been lowered held on with both hands to the iron grating, and thus relieved the other up above of his weight."

"The window was closed. In its upper part were two small panes, each with a cross bar. There were no means of communicating with Don Marcos that night. The door to 'La Torrecilla' was provided with a wicket, through which the sentinels were able to watch the prisoner. Then, there were double doors, and in the space between them a corporal and a sentinel were stationed. At the second door was a guard of some fifty men under the command of a captain and sub-officer, specially detailed to watch the prisoner."

It may be mentioned that this guard had been taken from the

Grenadier Regiment which was recruited from the tallest and best developed men in the army. Porfirio had taken note of this fact and took advantage of it in his interviews with Don Marcos. As the wicket of the door to the prison was placed very low down, the sentinels had to stoop quite a good deal so as to look through it, and from carelessness they did not take this precaution, except at very rare intervals, particularly so as no one ever dreamt of the possibility of any one being capable of attempting such a daring adventure as that of reaching the outside window of "La Torrecilla," just for the sake of carrying on a conversation with the state prisoner.

"When I was at the window and the sentinel approached the wicket, I was obliged to lean as far away as possible from it, so as not to be seen, and on such occasions I remained hanging by the rope (at a dizzy height above the courtyard), and my brother had to support me. Naturally, I did not have to remain in this position for long and immediately afterwards was able to catch hold of the bars with one hand. However, despite these difficulties, I was able to speak with Don Marcos on three separate nights."

Apart from the fact that health, strength and endurance are such valuable aids in the battle of life,—advantages which Porfirio acquired and which anyone else may also acquire, if they but choose to follow his example,—the mere fact of obtaining this assistance by means of physical culture leads to other moral attributes which are even more to be esteemed and without which he would never have been able to carry out those great deeds which have ennobled him, nor would anyone be able to triumph and rise above others without them.

A well balanced mind, magnanimity, grandeur of character, loyalty, nobility and a desire to look after the welfare of others are virtues peculiar to and distinctive of the strong, because with a knowledge of their power they need not stoop to rule, and it is their pleasure, one might almost say their duty, to protect and shield the weak. In this manner, by making himself strong through physical exercise, young Porfirio Diaz was preparing himself at the same time for a great moral worth. From that same source he imbibed the principles of all those great virtues which everyone recognizes, namely: coolness, chastity, temperance, love for work, simplicity of tastes and the power to endure suffering and temptations.

There have been but few such eloquent living examples of the maxim "*mens sana in corpore sano*," (a healthy mind in a healthy body), as that given to the world by General Diaz.

For children who commence their lives in this era of peace, and whose most sacred duty is to fit themselves to maintain

this incomparable gift, the greatest of all among the many which we owe to the regenerator of Mexico, it is plain that the development of the physique will not be for warlike purposes; but life itself is one continual fight and in order to be victorious in the social arena, these qualities are also indispensable; and, indeed, physical and moral qualities which are conducive to health and strength are perhaps even more vital now than they were then.

VI.

STOICISM.

Those Heroic Virtues Which are Practised in Daily Life.

The heroic epic of the last of the Aztec Emperors, who stoically suffered whilst his tormentors burnt his feet, rather than reveal the whereabouts of that treasure which his conquerors coveted, was an admirable example of fortitude worthy of all praise. However, there is something even more beautiful, more heroic and better worthy of our respect and admiration in the stoicism of those men who, in the fulfilment of their duty, undergo without complaint a host of trials, ill health, privations and disappointments during months and years without flinching, without revolting and without deserting their posts. The fact that these deeds of self sacrifice commonly pass by unnoticed and unappreciated in darkness and oblivion only serve to make them more sublime and meritorious.

If we look carefully into the great acts of stoicism recorded by history, we invariably find that their underlying motives contain a premeditated purpose, which, if it does not detract from them, at least shows that their authors did them in moments of excitement under the influences of pride, anger, fanaticism, despair, or all of these passions together.

But those who immolate themselves on the altar of daily duty, under ordinary and even common circumstances, serenely and steadily, fully realizing that their actions are unappreciated and passed over, are true apostles of unselfishness. Moreover, if these sacrifices involve suffering and life itself for the sake of a great and noble ideal, we then have an example of the most perfect and sublime stoicism.

Many moralists hold up as an example and a model of stoicism the case of that Spartan boy who hid a bird of prey beneath his vest and allowed the rapacious animal to tear and bite at him while in school without showing the pain he was suffering merely for the sake of being able to play with the bird after school hours were over. This example is both frivolous and immoral, because if looked at from the proper point of

view it is evident that there is no merit in suffering for the sake of a caprice or the fulfilment of a desire.

On the other hand, how good and useful it would be if the Mexicans were able to imitate, when the circumstances of life demand it, the silent, and, therefore, heroic fortitude of Porfirio Diaz when, as a subaltern, he was seriously wounded, suffering untold agonies and in danger of death, and yet kept on fighting and doing his duty, as though this was the most natural and usual thing to do in the world, without uttering a complaint or looking upon his acts in the light of a sacrifice.

Porfirio Diaz was a captain of the National Guard in 1857 when he resigned as prefect of the district of Ixtlán in the state of Oaxaca, in order to lead a company of that guard, under the orders of Lieutenant Colonel Manuel Velasco, against the revolutionary leader, Colonel José María Salado, who, with a body of nine hundred men, had taken up arms in the district of Jamiltepec against the constitutional government and the Reform.

On the 13th of August of that year Salado's column met the government troops, who hardly numbered four hundred men, at the little coast village of Ixcapa. Salado was killed in the fighting, and there it was that Porfirio, almost at the commencement of the action, received his baptism of fire, just fifty years ago last August 13. At close quarters he was hit in the side by a bullet which remained in his body, making a terrible wound. Besides this, as he fell the dry and wiry stubble of the field where this dramatic scene took place caused him other wounds in the side, which though not serious were extremely painful. The men saw their young captain fall and thought he had been killed, but a moment later saw him spring up undaunted, though pale and covered with blood, and throw himself again into the fray, where he continued to fight until victory crowned his efforts.

As first aid, Licenciado Montiel, the major of the regiment to which Porfirio belonged, on the same day of the fight applied a bandage of dry threads over the wound in order to stop the hemorrhage. The second treatment given was at the hands of an ignorant Indian who poisoned the wound with some barbarous compound of pine resin, white of egg and lard. It was not until some eight days after that a doctor, Don Esteban Calderón, was found to give the sufferer attendance, and who in spite of every effort and several terribly trying operations was not able to either find or extract the bullet which had made that terrible and complicated wound.

The return to Oaxaca was a long and painfully slow journey. Almost fifty days after the wound had been received, and when it was already in an extremely septic condition, Doctors Carlos

Ortega Reyes, (the future father-in-law of the young captain), and Pedro Ramirez y Gamboa, made the first proper examination and attempted to cure him. But at last they were compelled to admit their inability to do so as the bullet could not be found. All they succeeded in doing was to disinfect the wound by careful attention and drastic operations in which cauterizing with caustic potash were the principal means employed.

Weakened, almost exhausted by his sufferings and the loss of blood and with the bullet still in his stomach, Porfirio was called upon by the local government to take part in the operations against the implacable revolutionary leader Cobos, who had made himself master of the city of Oaxaca. Without hesitation, Porfirio responded to the call, giving no heed to his sufferings, or rather overcoming them by sheer force of will. And in this condition he took part in the long siege which the liberal forces withstood in the convent of Santo Domingo, undergoing terrible privations, as there were times when the besieged did not have a single grain of wheat or corn or a drop of water, yet even then were able to achieve such feats as that of attacking a line of defences fortified with bags of flour.

More than twenty days of siege had passed by and the lack of ammunition and provisions were already spreading a demoralizing effect, when Captain Diaz heard that one of the barricades which the enemy had thrown up at a corner known as "Cura Unda," and which faced the position defended by Porfirio, was largely built up with sacks of flour and bran. He immediately made up his mind to capture the position and take the food stuff which formed it and was so much needed by the besiegers.

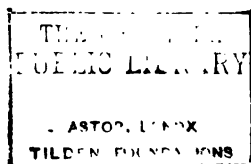
He at once proposed the assault to Governor Diaz Ordaz and it was agreed that the daring young officer should leave the lines with twenty-five men belonging to his company, and by means of excavations through different houses of the neighbouring block, reach the house known as that of the "Cura Unda," which served as an advance position to the coveted trenches.

Difficulties arose from the very beginning, and instead of giving Porfirio twenty-five men from his company, as had been agreed upon, he was allowed to take men from the irregular troops, among whom were several policemen who knew nothing about soldiering, and this when the captain had relied upon the discipline and obedience of his immediate subordinates, who had been trained under the ideas of order and justice which from the beginning were professed and practised by the future leader of men.

Despite all these difficulties, on the night of the 9th of Jan-



Lic. Marcos Perez, governor of the State of Oaxaca in the year 1849. It was he who introduced young Porfirio Diaz to Lic. Benito Juarez. The contact with these two great liberals awaken the sentiment of liberty on the seminarist and induced him to join the liberal cause. The first service that Porfirio rendered to the cause of liberty was the scaling of the walls of Santo Domingo Convent aided by his brother Felix, in order to communicate important political news to Lic. Marcos Perez who was kept a prisoner in said convent.



uary, 1858, at about ten o'clock, operations were commenced by breaking through a series of walls, which were fortunately made of adobe, (mud bricks), and which could, therefore, be bored through with carpenter's tools and water so as to soften the mud and make no noise.

At each house he broke into he had to leave a man behind to cover his retreat, so that when they reached the last house there were only three men left.

At the corner of this house there was a store, held by the enemy, who had stationed a detachment of troops in the trenches facing Santa Catarina. When the last walls were broken through the dust fell down on the other side, and the leader of the revolutionary besieging forces,—no other than General José María Cobos himself,—who happened at the moment to be in an adjoining closet, whilst his officers were in the store, heard the sound and saw soldiers pass through the aperture. He thought it wiser to remain hidden where he was.

Captain Diaz formed his handful of a dozen men in the second courtyard of the house, and placing himself at their head advanced resolutely to the attack. On the way they came across a young girl, whom they shut into a room to prevent her giving the alarm. He then immediately led his men to the back store room, the windows of which were behind the defenders of the trenches, and these men he drove out before him compelling them to fall back on the detachment which was stationed in the store. At the door of the back tienda a fierce hand to hand fight ensued, which lasted for over half an hour. On seeing that he had only a few men he ordered the bugler to sound the reveille, which was the signal agreed upon in case reinforcements were needed; but Colonel Ignacio Mejía, commander of the liberal forces, either did not hear the bugle call or else did not understand it, as, instead of hurrying forward the necessary reinforcements he ordered the detachment garrisoning the towers of Santo Domingo and El Carmen to sound the reveille as well, and at the same moment every bell in the old church building rang forth in joyful peals. This was a cruel irony to the captain, who despite his wounds had undertaken the task of obtaining provisions wherewith to alleviate the sufferings of the besieged garrison.

Meanwhile the situation was becoming more and more hopeless for Porfirio back there in the store, because as the attack was a long drawn out affair, the enemy had time to hurry forward from the main square twenty men of the Ninth Revolutionary Battalion, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Manuel González, who later on took up the national cause, at the commencement of the great siege of Puebla, but who at that time was a rabid "cruzado" (churchman).

When Porfirio saw that his superiors had abandoned him in the enterprise, he had only three men and a bugler left. Together they threw their hand grenades among the enemy and under cover of the confusion produced by the explosions, beat a retreat. Unfortunately, however, they missed their way among the excavations they had made in the walls and ended up by finding themselves before a blank wall with some of the enemy in front of them. However, despite the fact that his wound handicapped him, Porfirio was able to spring over the wall and made his way back to the lines of defence.

In the week following the ill fated attack upon the trenches made of foodstuffs, the demoralization of the besieged began to spread further and reached its climax when it was learned that the Government of the State of Oaxaca had decided to abandon the city to Cobos and withdraw to the mountains.

When this news was known to the young officers, among whom was Porfirio, they decided to act against superior orders, because they were not prepared to accept this humiliating outcome of affairs. Their decision reached the ears of Governor Diaz Ordaz and Colonel Mejía, and as the latter were not in a position to submit to their rebellious officers, they decided to punish them by placing them at the head of the columns which were to make the assault. On the dawn of the 16th of January of the same year, the liberal troops, divided into three strong columns of two hundred men each, marched down to the Plaza de Armas with the intention of driving out the large force commanded by the Cobos brothers, Don José and Don Marcelino, both of whom were rabid conservatives of Spanish extraction and unenviable fame.

The first column, which was to attack the streets today known as Juarez and Sagrario in the capital of the state of Oaxaca, was under the command of Lieutenant Colonel José María Battalla and Captain Vicente Altamirano, the first of whom fell fighting bravely a few hours later, the second being seriously

wounded. Despite this, however, the column reached the plaza under the command of the captain and future general, Don Mariano Jiménez. The second column was under the orders of Lieutenant Colonel Manuel Velasco and Captain Porfirio Díaz, whose old wound was causing him so much trouble, due to neglect and the hardships of the siege, that he was not able to even buckle his sword round him. The third column, headed by Lieutenant Colonel José María Ballesteros and Captain Luis Mier y Terán, a future brigadier, marched down the Calle de la Barranca and going in a southerly direction, today known as Porfirio Díaz and Second of April Streets, went on till they reached the palace and the front door of the church of La Compañía without encountering any further obstacles in their way than an adobe earthwork without artillery. Colonel Mejía was in command of the reserve, which was made up of four hundred men, who, if necessary, were to follow in the footsteps of the second column.

The latter marched down the streets of Carmen Alto, Campana and Colegio de Niñas until they reached the porch of the cathedral, after having carried the barricades and trenches in the Calle de la Cárcel, where there was a cannon which a brave sergeant turned over at the risk of his life, and thanks to which action the piece fell into the hands of his own men. At the corner of the Alameda and Portal del Señor, they joined the second and first columns, which had remained without leaders, and in the hard and unequal fighting which had ensued with the revolutionists, under the arches of the "Portales," Lieutenant Colonel Velasco also fell seriously wounded and the command devolved on Porfirio. He at once organized a new column with the remains of the first and second columns and marched boldly against the Palace, to which he finally succeeded in gaining access by the main doorway, while Ballesteros and Terán forced their way to the front of the west courtyard. The enemy, driven back at all points, were severely punished in the Palace, their last foothold, until they had eventually to abandon even that position in complete disorder, losing among dead and wounded, many officers and private soldiers, besides leaving in the hands of the victors arms, money, ammunition and numerous prisoners of war, of which over thirty were commanding officers and subordinates.

Lieutenant Colonel Manuel González retreated in disorder with the Ninth Battalion, through the eastern end of the Palace Archway. He was wearing on his breast the red cross of the Reactionary party and on that account very nearly fell into the hands of the troops who were following hot in his pursuit, as during the retreat he let his hat fall, and on turning to pick it up was recognized by his pursuers, who seeing the

insignia of the "Cruzados," as these partisans were called, fired upon him. However, he managed to escape unharmed.

Meanwhile, the reserve column had remained by the Cathedral, under the command of Colonel Mejía, who from that point directed the assault and capture of the Palace and the final victory of the army under his orders.

Then, far from taking a rest and looking to his wound, as his bad condition demanded that he should, Captain Diaz, who was suffering from frequent hemorrhages from the badly healed scar, which would break open at the least effort he made, took to horse, despite the pain he was in, and immediately set forth with Mejía and six hundred men in pursuit of the column commanded by Cobos, which was twice as strong as they were; and following hot upon their trail for a distance of eighty leagues, caught up with them at Jalapa, seven leagues to the west of Tehuantepec and defeated them.

Even then he did not rest from his labours. Without giving him promotion or any other reward which would serve as an encouragement and a just recompense for his series of triumphs the Government of Oaxaca appointed him as Governor and Military Commander of the District of Tehuantepec, with instruction to crush the frequent risings of reactionists which were continually taking place there. This appointment was by no means of an honorary nature or a sinecure, but a heavy responsibility and one laden with dangers, hardship and difficulties.

For the time being Conchado, a fanatical Spanish Carlist, an intruder of the same stamp as the Cobos brothers, was threatening Tehuantepec, at the head of numerous bands of Indians. Captain Diaz gave him battle and completely routed him at the Rancho de las Jícaras, on the 13th of April, 1859, and there won for himself the rank of commander, which, however, was not officially confirmed until some months after.

At that post of so much risk and work, suffering torture from the wound which would not heal, and, moreover, attacked by the insidious malaria peculiar to the district, he fought every week practically during two years, giving battle, repulsing the enemy, making assaults and avoiding ambushes and intrigues. In this way he slowly but laboriously earned for himself promotion to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel at the battle of Mixtequilla, in which he defeated Lieutenant Colonel Espinosa in June of 1859, and obtained the rank of Colonel by the assault and capture of the city of Tehuantepec in November of the same year.

During all this long time, the government to all intents and purposes had forgotten him, notwithstanding his useful services, all of which had been rendered without the least moral or material assistance, because there were times when as much as

six months would go by without there being any communication between the capital of the state and the Isthmus, which today are in easy touch with the whole world.

Twenty months after receiving the bullet wound at Ixcapa, some foreign surgeons succeeded in extracting the projectile which had been the cause of so much suffering to him. The officers of an American man-of-war, anchored in the Oontosa, gave a banquet on board ship to Commander Diaz and the Judge, Don Juan Avendaño, in their capacity as superior officers of the department. Warmed up by their toasts, the Americans, who were somewhat lacking in courtesy, expressed the opinion that the Mexican officers were not really of much account and obtained their promotion by favouritism. Whereupon, Judge Avendaño took the part of our men and in order to prove his statements, quoted as an example the career of Commander Diaz, who, with great difficulty, had earned his promotions, thanks only to his successful management of those matters which had been entrusted him, and this without taking any care of an old wound. Every one was very much interested in this description, particularly the surgeon of the ship, who at once offered to extract the bullet which was lost in the body of the brave Oaxacan.

A few days after this Avendaño returned their hospitality by giving another banquet in Tehuantepec, and on the following day he again mentioned Porfirio's wound, and it was decided to undertake the risky and trying operation, which this time was successful. The naval surgeon and his assistants located the bullet and extracted it by means of an incision made in the right lumbar region of the patient, who, as soon as he was rid of his irksome visitor, (the bullet), sent it to his mother as a token of filial affection.

On the day following the operation, Porfirio received orders from the Federal Government to immediately take over the governorship of Minatitlán, and to safely escort across the Isthmus, then infested by wandering bands of reactionists, a convoy of arms and ammunition which were urgently needed in the interior of the country, all of which was being sent out and coming in again through one of the ports of the Pacific coast.

In order that some idea may be formed of the importance of this mission, we may mention that the convoy consisted of eight thousand muskets, some carbines and sabres, a large quantity of cartridges, two thousand kegs of powder and many quintals of lead,—merchandise of ill omen which was then the main staple of commerce prevailing in the country—and which Don Matias Romero had obtained with great difficulty in the United States.

When the reactionary government heard of this they at once dispatched from Orizaba, Córdoba and Oaxaca various expeditions to intercept the convoy, and the established Government, thinking it would be impossible to save these supplies, ordered Commander Diaz to burn all of them rather than let them fall into the enemy's hands.

A slave to duty, and without taking into consideration his precarious condition or hesitating for one moment, on the day following that on which the bullet had been extracted, Porfirio got up from his bed, mounted his horse and started for Minatitlan. On arriving at the Rio de la Puerta, he only found one shaky canoe and accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel Gallegos and two officers undertook the crossing, but as none of them knew how to use the oars they ran a great danger of being dashed to pieces by the strength of the current in the rapids of that river. By dint of hard work they managed to reach Minatitlan with bruised hands, just at the moment when the enemy's forces were only some eight leagues away from them.

There was not a moment to be lost, and they at once commenced to unload the cargo from the steamer "Suchil," which had been lent for the purpose by the Louisiana-Tehuantepec Company. All night and part of the following day they were busily employed at this work, which took all the longer because the cargo was divided between two vessels, as the Captain of the steamer which carried the arms would not take the explosives, so the latter had been sent by another boat.

Without delay the active commander commenced his march by short stages, over the roughest roads and at the disadvantage of a tropical climate during the spring season, having continual skirmishes with the enemy who hung on his rear; all this without taking into consideration his wound which had only then commenced to heal.

The fact of having reached Tehuantepec did not place the convoy in safety, as Cobos in the meantime had again made himself master of the City of Oaxaca, after having completely routed Don Ignacio Mejía in Teotitlán. Against Diaz, who on two different occasions had defeated him, he sent a strong column under the command of General Alarcon, which was reinforced on its way by numerous bands of reactionists.

Alarcon and his troops were already encamped about ten leagues from Tehuantepec, when Porfirio, who had thrown up provisional fortifications in the San Blas quarter of the town, in the hope of receiving reinforcements, and who, unable to move on account of the arms in his charge, at last succeeded in obtaining close on two hundred carts, in which he was able to take

the convoy without accident as far as Juchitan, at first, and then on to Ventosa. In order to throw the enemy off his track, he did not take the same route, but cut his way by another one through the thickest part of the forest, taking care to close his path behind him by obstructing it with trees, thus making pursuit impossible.

At Ventosa the convoy was received by Don José Romero, brother of Don Matías, who took it by sea to Don Juan Alvarez at Zihuatenejo, where he was waiting for it.

This heroic deed was one among the many which Porfirio incurred in his love for his country.

VII.

PERSEVERANCE.

**Instead of Always Doing the Same thing, we Should
Endeavour to Attain a Fixed Purpose.**

At the foot of those celebrated hills of Acultzingo, of sad fame, where the Republican army for the first time fought against Napoleon III with such valour but indifferent fortune, at a point known as Puente Colorado, the foreign invaders again found their way disputed at the same place by Porfirio Diaz, who met them for the first time, after he had gained promotion to the rank of Brigadier General for his first victory over Marquez, the assassin, at Jalatlaco.

This was a victory made memorable by its admirable daring, courage and military merit. At first no one would believe it, as it was said that Porfirio had shared a similar fate to that of the illustrious Degollado and Valle, who were first defeated and then executed by Márquez, whose proud boast in those days was that he would put an end "to all those young liberals of genius and bravery." Apparently, he then seemed to be in a position to carry out his evil vaunt. Later on, however, his career was brought to an abrupt end.

The murderer of Ocampo, emboldened by the ease with which he had defeated those two brave liberals, took courage enough to approach the outskirts of the city itself, thereby creating great alarm. However, he did not get further than the Ribera de San Cosmé, where, after a short skirmish, he was driven back by the Oaxaca Brigade, which was then quartered at the barracks of San Fernando. Colonel Diaz, who was at the time in the Chamber of Deputies, immediately asked permission to undertake the defense of the city, but when he arrived upon the scene Márquez was already in full retreat.

On the same day in which this action had been frustrated by the withdrawal of the enemy, on the 25th of May, 1861, Porfirio received orders from the War office to take over the command of the Oaxaca Brigade, due to the sudden illness of General Mejía its commanding officer, and to immediately place himself under the orders of General Gonzalez Ortega, who with a division was following in pursuit of Márquez towards the

south. Whilst at Toluca news was received that the Revolutionary forces had marched through Santiago Tianguistengo in the direction of the mountains. General Gonzalez Ortega ordered Porfirio to combine his brigade, numbering two hundred and forty-two men in all, with the cavalry under General Antonio Carbajal, under whose orders he was to assist in harassing the march of the troops belonging to Márquez, until the main army had time to catch up with them.

The combined forces under the command of Carbajal and Diaz, left Toluca at three o'clock on the afternoon of the 12th of August, and by nightfall had reached the Hacienda de Atenco, where an engagement took place with the enemy's rearguard, composed of two hundred dragoons, who retreated without offering any particular resistance. At Tianguistengo it was learned that Márquez intended to stop for the night at Jalatlaco, leaving as a rearguard a body of over five hundred cavalry.

General Carbajal, who knew the country well, gave orders for the troops to follow a by-path, which would allow them to fall upon Jalatlaco by surprise.

As Colonel Diaz did not know the road, he formed the rearguard, until near the scene where the attack was to be made. Within musket shot of the main square General Carbajal drew up his cavalry along the road and from a point of vantage showed Porfirio the enemy's camp fires and ordered him to march into the enemy's position and keep up a running fight until supported by the main division.

When the attack was delivered Márquez's infantry was camped around a fire which had been built in the nave of the church. The cavalry was picketed all around the village, a circumstance which made the attack all the more difficult and risky, because when Porfirio attacked the church he was caught between two forces and subjected to a cross fire. A fiercely contested fight ensued and General Carbajal gave up his intrepid officer and his two hundred and forty-two men as lost in an attempt to measure swords with a far superior force, commanded by eleven generals and the veteran officers of the pick of the Revolutionary army, among whom were José María Cobos, Negrete, Márquez and others.

The supposition that Porfirio had been defeated had every appearance of being true and General Ortega decided to halt on the outskirts of the village and from a position of advantage opened fire on the enemy with one battery whilst waiting for daybreak.

But by this time the victory was practically won and Colonel Diaz sent an orderly post haste requesting the Commander in chief to hold his fire which was doing more damage to the attacking party than to the enemy. At the same time he asked

for a further supply of ammunition, as his own had been used up during the fight.

Before receiving a reply, Porfirio surprised a group of officers who were making their escape and learnt from them that Márquez with the greater part of his command was retreating towards the mountains. Without losing a moment, and despite the fact that his ammunition was nearly all spent, he immediately followed in pursuit of the retreating column and succeeded in cutting off over seven hundred foot soldiers and all the artillery and baggage and drove them back to the church.

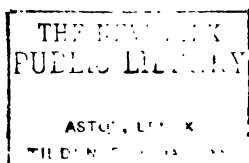
This move decided the day and turned it into a splendid victory.

Colonel Diaz immediately proceeded to inform the Commander in Chief of what had happened. He found him camped with his troops on the outskirts of the village. General Gonzalez Ortega at first would not believe that the fight was over; but, on being convinced that the dashing young Oaxacan had taken the position and had captured with a mere handful of men, ten field pieces, and all the baggage, completely routed the army of Márquez and taken more than seven hundred prisoners, among whom were eighteen officers, that leader immediately asked the government to promote the victor to the rank of Brigadier General and furthermore, in a letter to President Juárez declared that he would be ashamed to wear the "green badge" if Colonel Diaz was not granted this promotion as a reward for his triumph in the memorable action of Jalatlaco. Later on, when the promotion was officially confirmed, General Ortega warmly congratulated him before the assembled troops for his success and well earned promotion.

After Márquez had been defeated at Jalatlaco, Pachuca and Real del Monte, which may be considered as the last of the civil wars of the Reform period, General Diaz received instructions to follow up the ruthless leader, who in his retreat was pillaging right and left in the neighbourhood of Matamoros Izucar. The contravention of the treaties of La Soledad and the excesses committed by the French forces who took advantage of our generosity and good faith, were the reasons why the newly promoted general was ordered to combine forces with the defenders of the Pass of Acultzingo. The defence of this position was so urgent that General Diaz did not even have time to reach the mountain, or to take a part in the unequal fight. However, he took up a strong position at Puente Colorado, where at times he checked the advance of the enemy's vanguard and at others rallied the vanquished, averting hurried retreats, which but for his efforts would have degenerated into panics, and in this way earned fame for himself by holding in check the advance of the invading forces, as well



An attack by the brigade under command of general Diaz to the ranch of the Ladrillera de Ascarate, during the battle of the "Fifth of May of 1862." On the retreating of the french troops general Diaz prosecuted them up to the Hacienda of Rementería, in an effort to gain a decisive victory or losing his life, as it had been agreed between the generals taking part in the engagement.



as in putting a new spirit into the troops by his example and firmness, thus preparing the way for that desperate resistance which ended in the glorious victory of the 5th of May.

The defence of Puente Colorado was the first of General Diaz' feats of arms in the war of Intervention and the importance of which had a distinct influence in favour of later events.

It is a historical fact that great events have been a means by which great characters have shown themselves in their true lights and fulfilled their high destinies. So it happened that when the fatherland in its day of need called upon the people, the character of General Diaz, which till then was in a latent condition, showed itself in all its immense strength, to the development of his best qualities. For this reason we prefer that epoch in his life as that in which those virtues were called forth at the most critical moment of our national history affording ample scope for the accomplishment of noble and praiseworthy objects. We also prefer that particular period as proving to even the most suspicious and sceptical critic that General Diaz was not governed by ambition or selfishness during the course of that long and arduous campaign.

An abnormal power of perseverance and patient endurance was one of the striking traits which characterized General Diaz during the war of Intervention. In this respect one is at a loss what to admire most: the indefatigable constancy he evinced in the defence of his country in peril, or the wisdom and versatility with which he adapted means to circumstances, taking advantage of whatever lay within his reach and shaping his plans to suit his surroundings, but at the same time never losing sight for one instant of his ideal or his resolutions, with an unshakeable faith which could not be downcast by the bitterest reverses.

An explanation as to how these admirable qualities of perseverance were the means by which he attained these ends is of great interest. Thanks to these sterling traits in his character he was able to lead from victory to victory the Third Army of the East, his own creation, from southern mountains, through Miahuatlan, Oaxaca, La Carbonera, Puebla and San Lorenzo

until he placed the sacred flag of the Republic, radiant in its spotless glory, in the hands of President Juárez, who raised it again on the National Palace of Mexico.

The military and political glory and significance of the victory of the 5th of May might dazzle and mislead those who were not thoroughly informed as to the profound state of disorganization of the army in those times and the absolute lack of means of defence. However, the Republican leaders were fully alive to the situation, and knew the weakness of the country, so far as repelling a foreign invasion was concerned, as well as the treachery of certain Mexicans, which fact makes their constancy and faithfulness to duty all the more meritorious. Above all, the perseverance displayed by General Diaz was specially worthy of the highest praise, as he probably must have had but little faith in the future and still less in the cause than the others had, because his well known foresight, his practice of living in close contact with the rank and file of the army and above all his military genius and innate common sense, placed him in a position to clearly see and appreciate the faults and shortcomings, the weakness and mistakes of that government and army who were entrusted with reestablishing our rights.

Let us see how the unfortunate General Zaragoza viewed matters on the eve of the 5th of May, when addressing his generals who submitted their reports for the night of the 3rd of that same month, and when he decided to give that battle, now of immortal fame:

"Zaragoza said that up to the present the resistance made against the enemy could only be considered as insignificant, despite the fact that the Government had made every effort to gather together what elements were available under difficult circumstances at a time when the country was acutely feeling the effects of civil war. In any case it was a disgrace that a small body of foreign troops, which as far as the nation was concerned was of no more importance than a patrol, should be allowed to march into the capital of the Republic without meeting with the resistance which ought to be expected from a nation of over eight million inhabitants. In view of these facts he urged those present to fight to the last, so that even though it were not possible to be victorious, which after all was very difficult, and a forlorn hope, on account of our inferiority both

in arms and munitions of war, excepting our personal bravery and dash, at any rate we would lose honourably, after having fought to the best of our ability, so as to give the country time to prepare its defence.....”

The momentous battle took place, and despite the fact that it was a “very difficult and forlorn hope,” yet victory crowned our arms.

But this victory, among other inevitable consequences had the effect of arousing the invaders and bringing the combined strength of the expeditionary army down upon the victors.

If, as every one thought, this opportune moment had been taken advantage of for the purpose of organizing the defence of the country, perhaps the invasion would have been prevented from the start; but the ill-timed death of General Zaragoza deprived us of one of the few Mexicans who were capable of understanding that superhuman task of creating a strong and disciplined army out of nothing. The man who later on would carry out this prodigious task was not given any hearing by his superiors. Perhaps they did not as yet understand him. It is possible that they were jealous already, vaguely suspecting the true worth of the man who defeated Márquez. However this may have been, General Diaz was treated with disdain and even with threats at the commencement of his career.

He went into battle resolved to die or come out of it with honour. The orderly retreat of the French column against which he fought on the 5th of May, made it necessary for him to follow in its pursuit as far as the Hacienda de Rementeria, so as to prevent it again attacking our army and thus perhaps preventing a victory. This action on General Diaz’ part, however, met with the disapproval of his colleagues and fellow officers who threatened to have him tried by court-martial if he did not desist in his purpose. When the danger was past and the apparent disobedience of orders had been explained General Zaragoza approved of what he had done.

Later on when General Forey surrounded Puebla there was a moment when the peculiar arrangement of the French troops encircling the city made it possible, as was evident to the strategic genius of General Diaz, to divide the French army up into separate columns, detached from their base of operations, without means of resistance and whose defeat later on would have been easy. The opportunity was only feasible for a few hours.

General Diaz, together with several other Republican officers, among whom were Berriozábal, Llave, Lamadrid and Antillón, witnessed from the Cerro de Guadalupe, a hill near the city of Puebla, the operations of surrounding the city which were being carried out by the invading army. Knowing the

countryside perfectly and able to estimate that the number of the enemy did not exceed thirty-five thousand men, he saw the chance of attacking them separately, by taking advantage of the moment in which, as a consequence of the manoeuvres required to complete the circle, the expeditionary force would be divided into three isolated columns, each one of which would not number more than twelve thousand men, and which could have been attacked one by one by the Republican army, which was superior in numbers, without the possibility of their receiving reinforcements, on account of the distance which separated them. From the foregoing it is evident that even though these separate columns might not have been completely routed, at any rate they would have suffered considerable losses, which might have prevented the siege and completely altered the aspect of the campaign. However, this plan was rejected and the enemy was left to quietly close in around the city.

The final outcome could be seen even then, which was fatal for the cause, though from a military point of view one of the most notable sieges in history, even more so than the famous siege of Zaragoza, which was thought to be unique.

In another chapter we refer to some of the deeds carried out by General Diaz during this siege, and, therefore, for the moment will confine ourselves to stating that despite the fact that he was not in agreement with orders given by General Gonzalez Ortega to destroy all equipment and disband the army, a decision which very nearly cost the lives of the besieged officers, the hero of San Marcos, a slave to discipline, spiked his guns, destroyed the small arms and disbanded his loyal battalions of Oaxacans, whom he promised to reunite at a later date. One order was disobeyed by him, as instead of burning his ensigns he buried them, with the certainty that later on, as victor, he would be able to hold them aloft again, spotless, though they had been in the grave.

Were not these disappointments and bitter deceptions even more trying to endure than defeat itself and sufficient to induce anyone to desert, however persevering they might be?

When General Diaz was offered his liberty in exchange for his honour, that is to say on condition that he would not continue to fight for his country, he refused to sign the paper sent to the prisoners from the French headquarters, stating that the laws of his country forbade him entering into any such compromise derogatory to military dignity and honour and also because such action was entirely contrary to his own convictions.

The praiseworthy feature in this perseverance was that it was not limited to arrogant phrases, but showed itself in deeds.

decisive for the freedom of the country and in accordance with his ideas of duty.

He was shut up along with other officers as prisoners of war and with sentinels watching them, in a house on Calle de la Victoria, of the recently captured city. When he heard that he was to be deported abroad, with a courage, determination and coolness which was not imitated by the other prisoners, he took off his uniform and donned the wide sombrero (hat) and blanket of a visitor and left the house without even hurrying his pace, saluting the French captain Galland, on guard, who knew him and was standing at the door. On this salutation depended the success of his escape, because the sentinel was in the habit of letting anyone pass who saluted the captain, a fact of which the observant prisoner had made a careful note previously.

He had hardly got away from the building when the captain reflected that the face of the man who had saluted was familiar to him. On thinking the matter over he suddenly remembered who it was and making a search among the prisoners found out later on that one of the most dangerous had made his escape.

Without wasting a moment General Diaz proceeded to Mexico and placed himself at the disposal of President Juárez, who proposed that he should take charge of the War Office or the command of some army corps. He refused to accept the first offer. This action on his part is worthy of special comment because it was a notable instance of high minded patriotism as well as of sincere modesty and unusual disinterestedness. He emphatically declared that he was not worthy of occupying that high position, nor did he wish to hurt the feelings of older officers who would naturally think they had been passed over and he also pointed out the possibility of some of the conservative leaders who had just joined the republic being offended. The fact that he accepted an inferior position which was both onerous and fatiguing and that he undertook to reorganize, or rather create an army, which was exactly the work he was supposed to do as minister, proved his sincere desire to defend the country sword in hand and also by lending his efforts towards the formation of a much needed want: a loyal and disciplined

army. So that, when President Juárez only asked him for his intellectual aid, General Diaz also offered him his life and for that purpose selected the most dangerous post in the field.

The best part of General Diaz' military career commenced at this turning point. However, there is every reason to believe that up to this time he was not quite clear as to the real causes which threatened to exterminate our nationality, nor had he outlined the fundamental ideas of that plan of regeneration which later on was to be put into execution and through which he would accomplish by dint of energy and perseverance, of which there are but few examples in history, the development and progress of the Mexican nation.

The series of deceptions which he experienced were undoubtedly necessary, as forming a part of that sum total of personal observations and knowledge which he had to acquire before he was able to form a clear estimate of the state of affairs and be in a position to outline his future policy. From the time he made his escape from Puebla and took command of an army division, but still in a subordinate position under the incapable General Garza, until he was raised to a higher command, he had still to go through that trying period in which he was compelled by force of circumstances to surrender at Oaxaca, and then later on find himself again a prisoner in Puebla.

In that expedition under the orders of General Garza, and then later as Commander in Chief of the Army of the Centre, which was the semblance and not the reality of a command, seeing that day by day his followers deserted him, fell by the wayside through privations and betrayed their leader, it is surprising that General Diaz should have preserved his determination and faith by showing himself to be superior to adverse circumstances. On one hand, he was continually tempted by the alluring offers held out to him to forego his party; and, on the other, the only apparent prospects were the fickle moves of Esperon and Cajiga, who, though supposed to be Federalists, at heart were quite ready to let Oaxaca fall into the hands of the enemy, to say nothing of the treacherous behaviour of his most trusted officers who compelled him to surrender with honour before being obliged to do so through some traitor in his own army.

These deceptions and difficulties were some of the most valuable experiences in his life, and from them General Diaz formed the resolution to carry on his task with even more energy but by different means. The admirable perseverance displayed by him under these circumstances was evidenced in the way in which he unswervingly followed out his plans without any hesitation or fear, at the same time taking advantage



Francis Achille Bazaine, Feld-Marshal of France, successor to Marshal Forey in the command of the french intervenings troops (1863-1867). He, with the forces under his command besieged the city of Oaxaca which was heroically defended by General Diaz. When this one was forced to surrender by lack of elements he was congratulated by Bazaine by his desition of "not continuing war against his sovereign;" to this general Diaz answered "I have no more sovereign that the mexican people."

100-150X
100-150X

of every opportunity which presented itself, whilst learning a lesson from past experiences.

Without flag of truce, safeguard or guarantee, and in the face of the enemy's fire, General Diaz, accompanied by Colonels Angulo and Echegaray of his staff, went to General Bazaine, who then had his headquarters at the Hacienda de Montoya, near the besieged city of Oaxaca, and surrendered himself up. The French General received him cynically, stating that he was glad to see "that he had returned to his promise and would no more take up arms against his sovereign." To this General Diaz immediately replied, at the risk of being executed then and there, as he could hope for no leniency, that the "only sovereign he owed allegiance to was the Mexican nation and that he neither served the Empire nor recognized it; that the Imperialist cause was as much opposed to his views then as when he faced the enemy's cannon, but that further resistance was impossible, because he had neither arms nor men." General Diaz had taken the precaution to have witnesses with him of his interview with Bazaine, not through fear, but because he could thus place his loyalty beyond suspicion.

Bazaine was furious, not so much on account of his outspoken fearlessness, but because of the slight implied, and severely reproached him with having broken his "parole," which, of course, he supposed General Diaz had given when a prisoner in Puebla. But General Diaz replied that he had never given his word nor would he ever do so.

Bazaine then immediately ordered his secretary, Napoleon Boyer, to look up the register in which he believed they would find General Diaz' declaration. Boyer obeyed, but as he read his voice became lower and lower until it ended in a murmur. Bazaine, who at once understood what this meant, changed completely in his manner and, ashamed at his hastiness, behaved with deference and courtesy towards the prisoner. Such is the powerful influence which the example of a noble, honest and fearless character exercises.

However, General Diaz had yet to undergo many bitter ordeals and hardships before being again confined in the military prison at Puebla. He was first placed in San Loreto, then in Santa Clara and, lastly, in the Convento de la Compañia. Conquered and unarmed he suffered the humiliation of being led past the enemy's troops, and what was even harder still, again found himself a prisoner in that same place from which he had once made his escape, inspired with the brightest hopes for the future.

But these reverses in no way shook his faith or altered his allegiance. On the contrary, these circumstances and his seven long months of imprisonment only served as a stimulus to further energy and what was more, to new ideas, which later on were to be turned to account in the complete achievement of his plans. It would seem as though the long hours of silence and solitary introspection passed in prison, were the origin of those subsequent series of triumphs, the results of which are now enjoyed by us all.

As a fitting close to this chapter, we will quote General Diaz' own description of his last and second escape from prison. This story is in itself one of the best instances of those admirable qualities of perseverance, bravery, daring, coolness and even nobleness of mind which are characteristics of the man. Only the one who personally went through this incredibly romantic and daring adventure is able to describe it truthfully.

"In Puebla we were turned over to Austrian troops who divided us up and sent us to three different prisons. The generals, colonels and lieutenant colonels were sent to the fortress of San Loreto, where there were other prisoners belonging to the liberal party.....During our imprisonment in the fortress of Loreto, our captors again urged us, as they did formerly at Puebla, to take the oath of allegiance to the Empire, which all the prisoners did, with the exception of General Santiago Tapia, Colonel Castellanos Sanchez, Captain of Artillery, Ramón Reguera and myself.....In order to intimidate some of them, the Oaxacan Colonel, Don José G. Carbo, and others, were taken out and shot at midnight.....We were afterwards transferred to the convent of Santa Catarina."

"I was put into the same cell with Benitez and Ballesteros; but one day I pretended to be disgusted with their company, so they asked the master-at-arms to give them other quarters. This request was granted, and thus gave me the desired opportunity to make my plans for escape, with which end in view I commenced boring through the floor under my bed."

"My cell was situated in the highest story of the building, over a chapel in which had lived a nun who was reputed to have been gifted with miraculous powers. In the chapel was a well, the water of which, according to tradition, possessed medicinal qualities. I deposited all the waste and earth from my excavation works in the well. When I had bored through the solid cement I continued driving in a horizontal direction through a wall towards the street."

"After having been in the prison of Santa Catarina for five months they suddenly transferred all of us to the convent of

La Compañía, and this of course, was the end of all my work."

The simple statement of this fact is in strong contrast to the bitter nature of the disappointment which the prisoner must have experienced. Imagine, five months of weary toil devoted to making the excavation, all of which was rendered useless by the tyrannical order of one of the officers of the Austrian garrison. Most men would have given up in despair and have been forced to admit defeat. Not so General Diaz, who did not even utter a complaint. Only the weak hearted are overcome by adversity and are content to leave a task but half accomplished. The strong in mind and body, as we have just seen, are in the habit of referring to their reverses as incidents of little importance, and go on with their tasks, because to them the means of overcoming a difficulty are never lacking and they are able to support themselves with an energy, coolness and dignity which baffles the enemy and at the same time shows them to be superior to other men under similar circumstances.

General Diaz again describes his experiences in the following manner:

"Baron Juan Schizmandia had been left in command, whilst his superior officer, the Count de Thum, was away fighting in the mountains near Puebla. Lieutenant Schizmandia used to allow me to go to the bath accompanied by an Austrian sergeant, who followed me like a shadow everywhere. As this espionage irked me, I did not ask again for permission. He then offered to accompany me personally. This he did, but used all kinds of precautions, such as standing guard before the room where I was bathing and giving orders that no one should be allowed in the rooms adjoining me.....With this exception, he treated me with great courtesy, and on one occasion, after I had taken a bath, he invited me to lunch at his quarters and took me to the bullfight in the afternoon. It was late in the evening when I returned to my prison. However, I did not again accept any invitations of this kind, as I did not wish to lay myself open to being accused of having leanings towards the Imperialist cause. Later on he allowed me to go about the city in liberty, trusting on my honour that I would make no attempt to escape, and thus compromise him."

"The courtesies which were shown me were later on the cause of serious trouble for Lieutenant Schizmandia, as, when the Count de Thum returned from his expedition, he was extremely angry and placed his subaltern under arrest for having allowed me out of prison."

"The next thing Count de Thum did was to give orders that the windows to our cells should be nailed up. Despite the fact

that these windows were protected by heavy iron gratings, boards were nailed firmly across them, so that we were obliged to use artificial light even during the day time.....He also increased the number of sentinels on guard day and night, and gave orders that they should enter our cells at any time and remain inside whenever they chose to do so. I was specially singled out as an object for General Thum's animosity, and this determined me to effect my escape at the earliest possible opportunity. I had intended to make this attempt on the 15th of September, but as this happened to be the date of the anniversary of Independence, I could not carry out my proposal, because the streets of Puebla were brilliantly lighted on account of the celebrations. I was, therefore, obliged to postpone my plans until the 20th."

It may be mentioned that if General Thum had taken special pains to make things unpleasant for General Diaz, it was because at the first interview which he had with his prisoner he once again requested him to sign a written promise not to take up arms against the Intervention. General Diaz courteously, but with his usual firmness, refused to comply. Some months later the Count proposed to him that, at least, he might order the Republican General, Juan Francisco Lucas, not to shoot the "allies" (the Mexican traitors) who fell into his hands. General Diaz replied that as he was a prisoner, he was not invested with any authority, nor was General Lucas under his orders. However, the Count de Thum knew perfectly well that the distinguished Republican leader was obeyed even though he was in prison, because, whilst in captivity, he had signed the order appointing Don Luis Perez Figueroa to the rank of General. Therefore, this refusal made him all the more furious and he gave vent to abuse and threats, which later on were carried into effect. To this behaviour General Diaz replied that threats were only effective when intimidating cowards, and that the Count, for his part, was quite justified in redoubling his vigilance, as he was in making every effort to escape.

The following incident was worthy of the times of knight errantry. With the city as his prison and liberty within easy reach, because all he had to do was to mount his horse which always stood ready saddled, General Diaz never once made the least attempt at escape, because in so doing he would have brought the generous Austrian Lieutenant, who trusted in his word, into serious trouble. But when, on the contrary, an insolent and overbearing officer, carried away with a sense of his superiority, which for the moment placed him at an advantage, attempted to brow-beat, humiliate and oppress him, then it was that the lion hearted spirit of the insurgent leader led

him on to achieve those deeds which, were they in a novel, would appear as the merest romance.

The task which lay before him was this: To escape, alone and unaided, from an old convent, surrounded by very high walls, where he was closely watched night and day. All he had as helps were a dagger and a rope, which latter, for fear that it should be taken from him, he carried wound round his body under his clothes and next to his skin, despite the torment it caused him. The rope was smuggled into the bath room hidden among his clean clothes. The undertaking which he now had before him was of a far more serious and difficult nature than that of climbing over into the prison of Santo Domingo, an adventure in which he was assisted by his brother Feliz, who at that time was far away in a foreign land, working for his country's cause.

We will leave General Diaz to take up the thread of the story:

"On the afternoon of the 20th of September, I had carefully arranged and coiled up three ropes which I intended to use, leaving another one as a reserve and my well sharpened dagger....."

"Lieutenant Colonel Guillermo Palomino and Major Juan de la Luz Enriquez, who were the only ones among my prison companions to whom I had confided my plans, invited all the prisoners to play at cards on the night on which I was to escape, so as to leave the corridors and passages free."

"When 'taps' were sounded I quietly went to a room which had no roof. I had with me three of the coils of rope wrapped in a cloth. These I threw up onto the roof top, and with the remaining rope noosed a projecting stone water pipe, which appeared strong enough. It took me some time to do this, as I could not see the water pipe very well, because it was a pitch black night with only the fitful light of the stars and I could not, therefore, throw my rope with any certainty. I then carefully tested the strength of my line and immediately climbed up on to the roof top, untied this rope and found the two others which I had thrown up before me."

"My progress over the flat roof top towards the corner of San Roque, which was the point I had selected for my descent, was extremely difficult, because on the roof of the church, which overlooked the convent, was a detachment of soldiers who were placed there as guards to watch us from above. The whole length of this roof is made up of small domes, which correspond to each one of the cells. By crawling face downwards between these domes I reached the point at which I was to let myself down. Every now and then I had to stop and

carefully explore my surroundings, as the azotea was covered with pieces of broken glass which made a noise. Besides, I might have easily been seen by the flashes of lightning which played across the sky. At last I touched the wall of the church. From this point the sentinel could not very well have seen me without stooping considerably, so I was able to walk upright to a big window which opened into the guard room. I looked in here to see if there were any soldiers moving about. At this moment I very nearly met with a fatal accident, as the window gave way at the slightest touch, and, as the roof outside was very steep and sloping, besides extremely slippery with the rain, I lost my footing and nearly rolled over the side to the depths below."

"In order to reach the corner which overlooked the Calle de San Roque, where I had decided to make my descent, it was necessary to pass through a part of the convent which was occupied as the chaplain's quarters. It was known that this man had only recently reported some of the political prisoners who had bored a hole through the wall into his rooms, and as a consequence these unfortunates had been led out the next day to execution."

"I let myself carefully down on to the roof of the chaplain's house just at the very moment when a young man who lived there came in. Probably he had just returned from the theatre, as he seemed in a good humour and was humming a piece of music. I waited until he went into his room, but shortly afterwards he came out again with a lighted candle in his hand and approached the place where I was hidden. I drew back further into the shadow, in order to let him pass, and waited until he returned. When I thought time enough had been allowed for him to have gone to bed and perhaps to sleep, I climbed on to the roof of the convent, by the opposite side to that which I had descended, and at last reached my goal,—the corner overlooking San Roque street."

"At this corner there is a statue of San Vicente Ferrer, which I intended to use as a place to tie my rope. The effigy shook when I tested it, but there was probably an iron support inside it. However, in order to be on the safe side, I did not affix my line to the statue itself, but to the pedestal, which appeared to be sufficiently solid."

"It occurred to me that if I let myself down from this corner right into the street, I might be seen by some passer-by just at the moment when I was sliding down. For this reason, I decided to alight in a vacant lot which had a fence round it. I did not know there was a pig sty there."

"As I went down the rope turned with me a little and the dagger I had stuck in my belt was jerked out of its sheaf and fell upon the pigs below, probably wounding one of them, because they all commenced to grunt and squeal loudly, and more so when they saw me appearing among them. I had to stop for a short time until they had quieted down. I then vaulted over the fence which separated the vacant lot from the street, but I had to jump back quickly, because at that moment a watchman was approaching on his rounds examining the street doors to see if they were properly secured."

What a contrast between the intensely dramatic nature of this episode and the simple manner in which the actor describes an occasion in which he risked his life in a hundred different ways! The reason and explanation for this contrast is evident: to this extraordinary man the fulfilment of a duty, even at the cost of his life, is the most simple and ordinary matter. Furthermore, probably because he did not wish to over rate the importance of the affair, he omitted certain details which were truly surprising. He forgot, for instance, to mention that once he found himself free in the street, but in imminent danger of being discovered, re-captured and shot without ceremony, he had the incredible "sang froid" to walk up to a watchman who was asleep at his post and wake him.

"Don't sleep", he said, touching him on the shoulder.

"No Sir," replied the man, springing to his feet.

This daring stroke was not merely a piece of bravado, but was done for the purpose of misleading the watchman in case an alarm should be raised. Because it is evident that a fugitive would not think of stopping to speak with him.

The danger was so grave, indeed, that the following day the Count de Thum offered a reward of a thousand dollars to anyone who would bring him General Diaz, dead or alive. A certain Mr. Escamilla, who was then in charge of the District of Matamoros, of the State of Puebla, also offered a thousand dollars for his capture. Fortunately, neither of these rewards were ever earned. A curious fact is that the latter persecutor of General Diaz later on became a spontaneous and enthusiastic partisan of the "Plan de Noria," in which he took part with a regiment of cavalry which he then commanded.

There was yet another thing which General Diaz did. Between the pedestal of the statue of San Vicente and the ropes by which he let himself down he left two letters, one for Lieutenant Schizmandia and the other for the Count de Thum, which is worth publishing. It is as follows:

My Dear Sir,

"Lieutenant Schizmandia, who had formed a correct esti-

mate of my character, held me prisoner by giving me all the freedom possible, and this without taking the liberty to demand my word of honour, which I would never have compromised. With Lieutenant Schizmandia I was only bound by a tacit obligation not to compromise his responsibility which had been generously and courteously endangered in my favour. I made no definite agreement when this offer, which incidentally was not asked for, was accepted. Nevertheless, never have I been more securely held in prison as when enjoying that privilege. But you, who do not understand the Mexicans, except, by prejudiced reports, imagine that among us there are only men without honour and without heart, and that in order to hold us the only means which can be used are strong walls and close imprisonment, and therefore, you are to blame for having placed me in absolute liberty by having employed such useless means, in place of those rigid and indissoluble fetters which the above mentioned Schizmandia had so cleverly used in order to hold me in absolute subjection.

"In Papantla and Veracruz I hold prisoners from the regiment which you worthily command and who are given the best possible treatment. If you desire to make an exchange of these with some of our men whom you still hold as prisoners, you may send some one to Papantala and I assure you that you will be satisfied with the result."

PORFIRIO DIAZ.

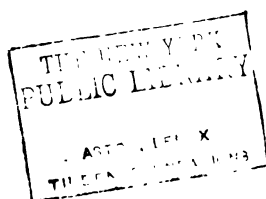
These two letters were found at the Palace by Don Matías Romero, among papers left by Maximilian. The letter to the generous minded Austrian Lieutenant explained that the reason why he had been reprimanded was on account of his conduct towards General Diaz.

General Diaz, who never forgets a favour, on hearing that his friend Schizmandia was among the prisoners at the Palace after the taking of Mexico, from his headquarters in Tacubaya sent a carriage for the Austrian officer to come and see him, and then after having greeted him affectionately, made him sit down to his table, introduced him to his family and showed him every possible attention. Some time after, when the Lieutenant was leaving the country, General Diaz took special pains to see that he had every comfort and safeguard possible as well as those who went with him.

What greater and loftier example of magnanimity, perseverance and patriotism can be cited than that shown in this case? With good reason have European sovereigns, who by tradition represent all that is honourable, covered the breast which harbours such sentiments, with their highest and most coveted decorations.



An episode of the battle of "Fifth of May" (Cinco de Mayo). In the distance, under the black cross, is the fortress of Loreto where general Diaz drawn a plan for beating in detail the french troops which were then preparing to besiege Puebla. Had this plan been adopted, the whole face of the campaign should have changed and it had avoided the disbanding of the first Army of Orient.



VIII.

BRAVERY AND COOLNESS.

"A Man Without Bravery is Like a Woman Without Modesty."

There was a world of truth in this saying of the Great Napoleon, because there is nothing more despicable than the cowardly and pusillanimous man, who is doomed, on account of this shameful defect, to suffer throughout life, which in itself is a struggle without quarter, the rebuffs and humiliations of his fellow men.

Unfortunately, in Mexico there exists an entirely false and dangerous idea as to what real bravery is, and more often than not this virtue is taken to mean a certain recklessness and arrogance of bearing which turns men into aggressive, quarrelsome and domineering bullies, making savages of them and causing them to stain their consciences with the blood of innocent people, or leads them to an ignoble death over a glance or an insignificant misunderstanding which should never have been the cause for a display of mere brute force. It is of the greatest importance that this error should be corrected, and there is no better way than by the examples contained in the life of General Diaz, whose character stands for all that is noble in a man's character, useful to the individual as well as to society and the observance of which infallibly leads to triumph in those bitter struggles which we have, perforce, to experience in daily life.

If bravery is to be a virtue, its essential characteristics must be, first a sense of duty, and then, coolness, prudence and justice. The result of a perfect combination of these attributes is that the man who acquires them is oftentimes showing far greater proofs of his valour by avoiding danger than in facing it and by passing over a slight than resenting it. The history of the life of General Diaz is replete with instances of that particular kind of bravery which leads a man to risk his life for the sake of duty in the face of dangers from which he can only save himself by the merest chance. The only difficulty lies in making a selection of examples, because his life presents so

many instances which are equally instructive and illustrative.

For the purpose of pointing a moral, we have on different occasions already quoted several instances in this book, such, for instance, as the action at Jalatlaco and the pursuit of the French Army after the battle of the 5th of May, in which General Diaz and his companions in victory risked their lives for the sake of their country and for the purpose of following up the enemy, because the commanding officers of their forces ordered them to the duty. This explains why he did his duty unflinchingly until relieved of it by Zaragoza who ordered him to desist from the pursuit. We have spoken of his encounters with Cobos, the "patricios" of Tehuantepec and the Imperialists during the Intervention. Throughout those times General Diaz risked his life without fear or hesitation, day by day, and at times, hour by hour.

We would draw attention in further praise of this kind of bravery, to his peculiar power to influence a panic stricken soldiery, and his calm determination to make all conflicting influences subordinate to a sense of duty, which upheld him in the most terrible and critical moments, thus enabling him to extricate himself from the most desperate situations.

At the commencement of the month of April, 1863, during the famous seige, General Ortega ordered General Diaz to take his command and reinforce that extensive line from San Augustin to San Marcos, comprising seventeen blocks, and relieve General Escobedo who was unable through sheer exhaustion to hold the line of defences at that point any longer without aid, as that particular section constituted the most important and dangerous place in the whole situation.

Immediately upon assuming command General Diaz actively commenced to strengthen the fortification; but whilst engaged upon these the French forces delivered a series of intrepid assaults, in which they were repulsed on each occasion and unable to enter the city again at that particular point.

It was already known that the French were mining their way towards the San Marcos block, but no one thought that the underground works had been pushed forward so rapidly until one day at the beginning of the month the sound of muffled explosions was heard near the Meson de San Marcos.

General Diaz had drums put on the ground with dry peas lying on the parchments and by the sound these made on the taut drumskins he was able to tell that the excavations were still comparatively far away near the Hospicio block. However, by the time it was dusk the French had made a considerable headway with their underground works and their artillery commenced to batter enormous breaches in the walls

of the Meson, through which an invading column poured, carrying everything before them. Panic seized upon the defenders of the Meson, and they fell back into the interior of the building in the greatest disorder under a scathing artillery and musket fire. It seemed as though the efforts made by General Diaz and his officers to stem the retreat and avert a disaster were to prove useless. The Zouaves, at all times formidable fighting men, but then flushed with victory, were already coming up to the attack through one of the breaches in the walls. General Diaz, however, did not lose his presence of mind for one moment. Near the fountain in the courtyard was a howitzer which had been placed there by superior orders. This piece he rapidly trained and fired in the direction of the breach, mowing down the first number of men who got through. In the momentary respite the piece was again loaded, and, as a further dash was made, it was fired again with terrible effect. This heroic deed was the turning point in the whole situation, and the defenders, encouraged by the brief interval which occurred, returned to their posts and after a fiercely contested fight, eventually drove out the enemy, who were compelled to fall back upon their lines after suffering considerable losses.

Had it not been for the personal bravery and presence of mind displayed by General Diaz on this occasion, in knowing how to control a panic, it is more than probable that the San Marcos defences would have fallen into the enemy's hands, and with them the greater part of the city, if not the whole of it.

But, as it happened, the behaviour of the commander greatly encouraged the troops, who, seeing that they were led by a man, from that time on showed such magnificent fighting qualities that the French were compelled to abandon all attempts to take the position defended by General Diaz, as they realized that it was impregnable. The position was held to the last, and was only occupied after the besieging army had taken the city.

An admirable contrast to the foregoing instance of active bravery is the bravery of a passive nature which we will now cite, as being one of those qualities which are most needed in daily life as a means to withstand the reverses of fortune and the hidden dangers to which all men are exposed.

Immediately after the taking of Matamoros, subsequent to the acceptance of the "Plan de Tuxtepec," and its reform effected at Palo Blanco, General Diaz, realizing that the result of that victory (for which he was congratulated by many American officers who came from Texas for the purpose) was not sufficient to carry on the campaign and complete it successfully, decided to leave the country and come down by sea

as far as the Sotavento coast, so as to be able to get into the thick of the fight and combine with his principal partisans and the Oaxaca forces.

With this purpose in view, he went to the United States, and without further adventure took passage at New York, not New Orleans, as has been stated, on board the "City of Havana," a steamer which had been chartered by the Government as a mail packet, and which belonged to a firm of this city of which Don Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada was a partner. This boat was stopping at Tampico and Veracruz on its way to Cuba. In this connection it may be mentioned that President Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada was a partner in the house of Cardeña and Company who had a concession from the Government to carry the mails on these steamers.

In order to run the least possible danger, General Diaz provided himself with papers, the diploma and surgical instruments of a surgeon, and passed himself off as a Cuban medical man, under the name of Dr. Ramirez de la Bosa, who was returning to his country. Besides this he disguised himself with a wig and dark glasses, and looked the part to such perfection that Licenciado Ireneo Paz and Don Mariano Ruiz, who met him casually, completely failed to recognize him through the disguise.

While at Tampico the steamer "City of Havana" took on board Government troops who were going to Veracruz, among whom were several officers who recognized him at once, as they were the same men whom General Diaz had but recently defeated and made prisoners at the capture of Matamoros. It was useless for the mysterious passenger to attempt to avoid the inquisitive eyes of his fellow travellers and to refrain from appearing at the table, so as not to meet them.

From the very first he realized that he had been discovered and was being closely watched, and as unexpected bad weather was delaying the loading of the vessel and her departure to sea, he suspected they would seize and shoot him. Rather than run this imminent danger, he decided to make his escape and trust his life to the dangers of the sea and the sharks which infest those waters and the port of Tampico, rather than run a greater risk in remaining on board. To make matters even more difficult, the steamer was anchored a long distance from the entrance to the port. However, his mind was made up. He divested himself of his clothes, and without other weapons than a dagger with which to defend himself against the attacks of sharks, let himself into the sea over the ship's side. He did not provide himself with even a life buoy, so as to be less conspicuous a mark for anyone who might see him and open fire on him in the water.

As it happened, he was seen immediately, because he was watched very closely, and the terrible cry at sea of "man overboard" warned him that he was discovered and would be pursued. Very soon after he heard the sound of oars near him of one of the ship's boats which had been lowered in his pursuit. At first he managed to put a distance of one thousand metres between him and his pursuers.

Then commenced a terrible race; a man hunt, witnessed by hundreds of spectators, in which the destinies of the Nation trembled in the balance. The exciting chase was watched by the passengers of the Havana and the crews of two vessels, one American and the other from Campeche, both of which were anchored near the spot.

Assistance was proffered him from the Campeche boat whilst he was swimming past her, but he would not accept it.

With all the strength of his powerful lungs and with the skill and daring of an expert swimmer he cleaved his way steadily through the water, but in an effort to throw his pursuers off his track, lost his bearings, and instead of making for the shore, changed his direction by mistake and made for the open sea.

At length, though General Diaz was swimming strongly, his powers began to fail him and after swimming round and round in a vain endeavour to find the right direction, he was forced to abandon the attempt and was dragged into the boat. There he lay on the bottom of the ship's pinnace, completely worn out by his superhuman efforts and the amount of sea water which he had swallowed, on account of the rough choppy weather, but not unconscious, as some have said. When they were near the ship's side the postal agent, Gutierrez Zamora, threw him a shirt to put on, as he was naked.

After he had been brought on board, Lieutenant Colonel Arroyo, commanding President Lerdo's troops, at once attempted to take charge of the prisoner and try him by court martial, and thus obtain his promotion to the rank of General in reward for his diligence and zeal; but the dauntless swimmer protested against this course of action and taking his pistol from under the mattress in his state room where it was hidden, called upon the captain of the ship to offer him the protection of the American flag, under which the "Havana" and her crew were sailing.

Lieutenant Colonel Arroyo was all for executing General Diaz without further ceremony, as thereby he was assured of his promotion to the rank of General, whereas, if he merely took him along prisoner, the Government would not consider this as any particular service and promotion would be held

from him as had occurred in the case of Terán who had been taken prisoner and not executed on the spot.

The Captain of the ship listened to General Diaz' requests and his aid was the more willingly given as between him and the prisoner there had passed certain Masonic signs. Moreover, the American sailor was greatly impressed with the daring and courage of a man who had risked his life in such a plucky manner.

It was arranged that he should be left under guard, but was considered at the same time as being on American soil, and the Captain stated he would not give him up until they reached Veracruz. However, he tried to disarm him, whereat General Diaz declared that he would only use his pistol in self defence, but that they would have to kill him before he would allow anyone to deprive him of his only weapon.

The Captain ordered that the guard, of an officer and five soldiers, which had been placed at the door of General Diaz' cabin should be withdrawn, but Arroyo, with the idea of his promotion still uppermost, made a pretence of putting a guard to watch the store of ammunition and in this way continued to keep a close watch on the man he looked upon as his prisoner.

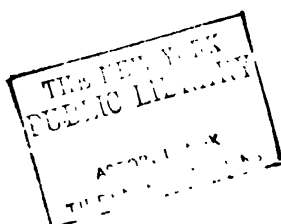
The following night was intensely dark and the fact that a storm was brewing made all circumstances favourable, accordingly General Diaz determined to make another attempt at escape, despite the fact that the Captain had offered to transfer him to an American man-of-war which was anchored near Tampico, an opportunity he did not care to avail himself of as it would have delayed his plans.

He cleverly managed to slip into the cabin of the purser, whose name was Coney, and told him of his plans. This officer who was a good friend of his, endeavoured to dissuade him from his determination and eventually suggested another way out of the difficulty which was apparently not so dangerous.

General Diaz agreed to follow his advice. A life buoy was thrown into the sea so as to make the government soldiers think he had jumped over board. Meanwhile, the prisoner hid himself in the cabin, not under a sofa as common rumour has it, but in a small locker. This ruse proved to be entirely successful, as soon afterwards the disappearance of the prisoner was noticed, and his captors rushed to the side of the ship and commenced eagerly scanning the sea in the hopes of catching sight of him. What they did find, however, was the life buoy and as this was covered with great patches of bright red iron rust which looked exactly like blood it was surmised that the



Former-general Leonardo Marquez. One of the most feared leaders of the reactionary cause lately Lieutenant General of the so-called Mexican Empire. He was noted by his cruelty, victims of which were the young patriots who were shot at Tacubaya, the great patriot Ocampo and the illustrious generals Degollado and Valle. Marquez was always beaten by general Diaz from the first time they met, swords in hand, at Jalatlaco; at this encounter general Diaz, with 700 men under his command, defeated 4,000 under Marquez and eleven generals, among whom were Cobos and Negrete; later Marquez was defeated again at Pachuca and Real del Monte, later on at San Lorenzo, and finally at the city of Mexico, the capitulation of the capital of the republic practically ended the French intervention.



fugitive had been eaten up by sharks, which seemed to be a very probable explanation of his non-appearance.

However, as an additional precaution General Alonso Flores had troops posted all along the beach, so as to capture the prisoner, should he succeed in reaching the shore.

Meanwhile, General Diaz was undergoing indescribable torments, cramped as he was within the narrow limits of that tiny cabin locker, or cupboard. He could not stand upright, nor was he able to sit down, and had, besides, to keep his legs wide apart, so that the small doors of the locker could be shut. To add to the trying situation, Purser Coney, as a matter of policy and in order to disarm all suspicions, invited the Lerdist officers into his cabin, where they would often spend hours chatting and playing at cards. One of them who was sitting in front of the cupboard every now and then tilted his chair back, thus pressing the flaps of the door against the unfortunate man hidden within who suffered agonies while it lasted. In this manner seven endless days of torment were passed on a diet of ship's biscuits and water until the vessel reached Veracruz, where the dangers and difficulties of escape became more serious. The task before him was to escape from the ship without falling into the hands of the Lerdist troops who were continually on the lookout for him.

Colonel Juan Enriquez, who was then chief of the coast guard service at Veracruz, managed to smuggle in to him a dilapidated sailor's suit and a very old pair of boots and at the same time sent him word to say that a row boat in charge of a man whom he would recognize by certain signals would come along side for him.

Naturally, General Diaz awaited for his arrival with anxiety and was on the lookout continually for him through one of the portholes, at the risk of getting a bucket full of dirty water on his head from the cleaners busy on the deck above. When the ship commenced to unload bales of cotton and the barges came alongside, his boat also appeared among them, and then the man, whom everyone supposed had been eaten by the sharks of Tampico, made his escape. A trivial incident favoured his plans.

As it happened, a bale of cotton broke loose from the crane and falling, wounded a poor woman on the head. Under cover of the confusion which resulted and the bustle and hurry of unloading operations, General Diaz slipped over the side of the steamer into his friend's shore boat and made his escape from the "City of Havana" after having experienced some of the most trying and thrilling adventures on board her that could be imagined and in which he had over and over again been face to face with instant death.

The fact of landing by no means put an end to these dangers. On the contrary, he had still to run the gauntlet of new and risky undertakings. Despite the report officially rendered by Arroyo as to the untoward death which all supposed had overtaken the daring prisoner, but which had been accepted with reserve as a doubt still existed on the matter, the Government took great precautions and had the port of Veracruz closely watched.

General Diaz got his first reminder of how greatly his disappearance had stirred the officials upon reaching the fiscal wharf, as he was stopped by a customs officer who said that every one landing had to submit to a careful search. This restriction, however, was not observed, for some reason or other, in his case.

Fearing that he would be recognized, as dusk had not yet fallen, he begged his rescuer not to return to the ship for more cargo, but to take him in his shore boat to a place at a distance from the government wharf where he could safely land. On leaving the shore boat he immediately went in search of his mozo, who was waiting for him on the beach with two horses.

Without a moment's delay, he took to the road with the intention of immediately rejoining his partisans who were keeping up the revolution in that part of the country, and a few hours later reached Boca del Rio, some four leagues distant from the port.

He dismounted at a little hut in order to make enquiries, but just at that very moment a detachment of Lerdist troops came along.

General Diaz at once beat a hasty retreat, but instead of finding his mozo (groom), who had ridden off like a coward as soon as he saw the enemy approaching, he almost ran into the arms of the Colonel of the expedition, who knew him perfectly well by sight. By good fortune he was able to pass him on the road without being recognized, and reached the river where he found several boats moored, one of which he took across to the other bank.

A little further on he met a man on horseback and made up his mind to either ask him for his mount or take it by force. However, there was no necessity for the latter course, as the man was a friend who willingly gave him lodging and food besides a horse to continue his journey.

In this way General Diaz succeeded in making his way to Tuxtepec and Amatlan where General Vela was encamped and from that time took command of those operations in the field to the success of which we owe the present prosperity and peace which now obtains in this Republic.

The events narrated in this chapter are good instances of the whole tenour of General Diaz' life and as such serve to point a useful lesson.

IX.

ORDER AND PROBITY.

“Little Politics and Much Administration.”

The honesty of General Diaz has been such that not even his enemies have ever attempted to discuss it, as they are satisfied that this point in his armour is so impregnable that it can resist all attacks, however intense they may be.

But there is a widely prevalent opinion, which is not only confined to the ill-informed, but also to many people who have the history of great men of foreign birth at their finger's ends and utterly ignore the lives of illustrious Mexicans, that the most remarkable statesman which our country has had and the only suitable ruler who has governed our destinies, became so only in the latter years of his life, when he had laid aside his sword and warrior's armour, in place of the simple tricolour band distinctive of the First Magistrate of the Republic. There are a great many people who really believe that the administrative genius of President Diaz first originated and commenced as the outcome of a series of lucky ventures some thirty years ago. This is a most puerile error.

Those who hold this opinion ignore the fact that nature is not capricious, and confound the vagaries of a beginner with those immense difficulties which at the outset he had to contend with in the regeneration of the country and the creation—in the true sense of the word—of its main sources of wealth. These difficulties were so great that no one would have been able to overcome them, even had men of the highest and cleverest intelligence made the attempt. Unfortunately, among those who up till then had attempted the task in vain, he who knew how to think did not know to love and he who had the knowledge and was willing to undertake the task, was lacking in honesty; finally there were those who, lacking every qualification, boasted of their ability to accomplish the task.

What, then, was the powerful lever which General Diaz employed in order to perform wonders and carry out that which

was thought to be impossible. The answer is a simple one: he merely used to best advantage his own strength of character aided by the essential qualities of honesty and a sense of order.

Porfirio Diaz, as a law student, before he became a soldier, had already developed into an administrator and organizer, and this means a good deal. In the year 1855, when barely twenty five years of age, he was appointed sub-prefect of Ixtlan by General García, Governor of the state of Oaxaca. Shortly after he took up his official duties the government began to take notice of that obscure and insignificant employe, who rendered detailed accounts of the taxes collected, which—another unheard of thing—commenced to increase instead of decreasing, as was generally the case when new sub-prefects were appointed. Moreover, he rendered reports as to the improvements and economies effected as well as those which might be carried into effect, besides taking steps to establish order and system in his administration.

These are facts worthy of admiration, because in those times the national government stood for all that was symbolic of disorder and confusion. In this respect the sub-prefectures were at the lowest ebb, and the sub-prefects, themselves, knowingly committed every kind of abuse, by utilising the public revenues to their own personal benefit, without further responsibility than that of pandering to the last government in vogue which kept them in position.

Here was the case of a young man who was given the opportunity and who instead of taking discreet advantage of it, refrained from robbery and other irregularities. On the contrary, he turned over to the government certain funds which he had acquired by force of arms and declined to draw his salary as a captain in the National Guard, as he said "he did not consider it was right to take it whilst he was receiving a salary as sub-prefect." He further stated that whilst he was teaching the officers under his command how to read, write and fulfill their military duties he would only pay them at the rating of private soldiers, seeing they were not fit to receive more. He also credited the cost of living expenses to the common fund on the grounds that these regimental expenses were met by voluntary contributions received from the neighbours, and what was even more noteworthy, in that time of social distinctions, he gave the private soldiers preference as regards the payment of their wages for the reason that they were more in need of it than their officers.

These proceedings must have been a cause for considerable scandal in that world of military officialism, accustomed as it

was to the corrupt traditions of the colonial regime and the chaos of the first years of Independence.

It is interesting to follow the first experiments in the art of government made by the man who later on was destined to bring about the regeneration of his country by his able administration of its public affairs. We see him in Tehuantepec, left to his own resources and initiative, by force of circumstances and the distance. There, during two long years neither the state government and much less the Federal, could have any influence over his actions, nor make suggestions, give advice, or help, either moral or material. On the contrary, when they did have an opportunity to intervene, it was only for the purpose of placing obstacles in his way. Up to that time the only encouragement which he had received for his honest administration was a sincere congratulation from Benito Juárez, on his return from Ixtlán, and the privilege, which in itself was a significant one, of not being obliged to give a bond as guarantee of his managership of the government of Tehuantepec. With his customary scrupulousness, Porfirio suggested that as he did not have the necessary means wherewith to guarantee his services, the management of the taxes should be entrusted to some one who could put up the bond which was called for by regulations. Don Benito Juárez, however, declared that any such formality was quite unnecessary in the case of one who had conducted himself with such integrity at Ixtlán.

By rights, Porfirio was Governor and Military Commander of Tehuantepec. In actual practice he was everything; governing, fighting, administering justice, conquering and acting as peacemaker and arbitrator, directing public works and collecting and distributing the revenues. In fact undertaking every duty which his conscientiousness imposed upon him.

It is true that he was four years older than when at Ixtlán, and ranked as Lieutenant Colonel; but these advantages were discounted by the cruel suffering he endured from the bullet which still remained in his body as a remembrance of his services at Ixcapa. Added to this, he was a victim to malaria, which gained an easy hold upon a constitution enfeebled by loss of blood, hardships and fatigue. In this condition he was obliged to carry on a daily warfare, elude the treacheries of the "patricios," as the opposing faction was called, who attempted to assassinate him several times from cover, by shooting at him as he passed; he had to be aware of the dagger and the effects of that poisonous plant called "el camotillo," which either kills or maddens those who eat it, concealed in some inviting morsel, and finally and above all, he had to close his eyes and ears, like the prudent Ulysses, to the wiles of those

Zapotec sirens, in the shape of living statues of bronze, as treacherous as they were beautiful and whose machinations accounted for more soldiers than the bullets of the fanatical "patricios."

Lieutenant Colonel Diaz triumphed over and was above all these difficulties, because he knew how to meet both open enemy and sickness, as well as treachery and pleasure.

It was not enough for him to triumph as a soldier and to defeat the enemy and rule them by force, as was customary with the other Reform leaders. He thoroughly realized that this would only mean taking partial measures and that the adversary would only remain in subjection for as long as the firm hand of the conqueror could make itself felt. For this reason he endeavoured to obtain more lasting results by convincing his opponents of the real and actual advantages of a political creed, which others would vain force upon them by the cruelest and most arbitrary methods, thus making the cause a hated one. The policy adopted by Porfirio Diaz was to gain the adherence of those who opposed him by offering them solid and tangible guarantees of peace and prosperity, and these, after all, were the only logical and effective means of reorganizing a society, made up of many and conflicting elements, which in the long run were bound to accredit a hitherto new and untried political system.

In this manner, in the brief respites between battles and skirmishes, Lieutenant Colonel Diaz, who was then barely thirty years of age, commenced in Tehuantepec his stupendous task of evolving a definite and stable ideal of Mexican nationality, and the means he employed to accomplish this Titanic task were order, unity, respect for the rights of others and the observance of social obligations. This labour of unselfishness is today an accomplished fact, and the admiration of the entire civilized world.

He commenced his self-imposed and difficult task by educating and raising the standard of morals in the Army, because he knew that without the existence of an honest and orderly army there could be neither order nor social stability. With this end in view, he was particularly solicitous in Tehuantepec, as he had been in Ixtlan, that the private soldier should never want for his wages or his rations. He was determined that he himself and his officers should lack both, before the private soldier. However, in this respect he was not lacking in his duty towards his officers, and when the money at his disposal was not sufficient to provide for all, he organized an officer's mess, in which he participated.

Another system which he instituted was a department to

look after and repair the arms and superintend the supply of ammunition. As Governor, he reorganized the schools and saw that they were provided with the necessary scholastic requirements. Furthermore, convinced by personal experience of the unhealthy condition of that marshy and malarial country, he undertook the drainage of Tehuantepec. There are but few who would have attempted to look after the sanitary conditions of a city which was hostile and practically in a state of siege. Forty years later President Diaz, the man who at that early age and under such trying circumstances had found time to think of the sanitary conditions of his administration as a subordinate, had the pleasure of laying the last stone to the drainage works of the Valley of Mexico—a work which the power and wealth of Spain had been unable to even commence within three centuries.

And yet the young Governor of Tehuantepec still found time to help the Federal Government besides carrying out the duties corresponding to his own jurisdiction. He found time, because his talent for organization and system saved him energy, time, money and trouble.

On the day following that on which the bullet had been extracted from the old wound which had troubled him for years, he rose from his bed, (as we have already mentioned in another part of this volume) and rode across the Isthmus on horseback from Minatitlan to Ventosa, escorting an important convoy of arms and ammunitions which was of vital importance to the Federal Government, and which would, undoubtedly, have fallen into the hands of the revolutionists had it not been for the timely and prompt cooperation of the Governor of Tehuantepec.

Six years after the occurrence of these remarkable instances of administrative ability, which are but little known and here, perforce, briefly mentioned, their author had already reached the rank of Brigadier General after making his daring escape from the Convent of La Compañía.

By appointment of the lawful Government of the Republic, which at that time had been forced to make its seat at Chihuahua, reduced as it was to a mere symbol of authority, General Diaz was acting as Commander in Chief of the Army of the East and by this fact alone, was virtually governor of half the nation. But where was that Army, what was its numerical strength and what resources had it? The Third Army of the East (the first was destroyed at Puebla and the second at Oaxaca) consisted of nine hardy ranchers, practically without arms or equipment, wandering in the rugged mountains of the south. Shortly afterwards they were reinforced by one hundred and forty men under Alvarez Cano.

These, briefly, were the elements which that General without a command had wherewith to accomplish his purpose. Treachery and desertion had proved to him the profound demoralization of the old army, and convinced him of the utter impossibility of its ever being reorganized. An entirely new army had to be created, and to this tremendous task he set himself with a whole hearted energy which was one of the highest and grandest incidents in his eventful life.

Whilst a prisoner, he wrote to his brother Felix, who was then in the United States obtaining arms and munitions of war for this army in creation:

"What we are most in need of are arms and some money to carry on the war with, and we must not draw too much upon the smaller towns".....

This is the how the country was relieved of its greatest evils. There was to be no further drain upon the people and this further evidence of perspicacity on the part of General Diaz again proves his masterly grasp of the situation and his honesty in meeting the most urgent needs of the country.

Until then no one had disputed the rights of the soldiery, whether victorious, vanquished or merely on the march, to make levy upon cities, towns and country estates and to take by stealth or by force whatever they needed in the way of arms, provisions or quarters, to say nothing of what was not needed such as the honour of families and the lives of those who resisted them. These rights were assumed indiscriminately by the partisans of any of the opposing factions, and in this respect there was but little to chose between liberal and conservative. As a natural outcome, the peaceful inhabitants of the country came to hate and fear one party as much as the other, and it practically meant the same to be despoiled and imposed upon by one side or the other, as neither gave them any guarantees. Consequently, the people were ready to help conservatives or liberals in order to save themselves from immediate trouble. This was one of the potent reasons why the war became interminable; but despite the simplicity of this explanation, no one had had the common sense to see it in its true light.

The key to the whole situation lay in knowing how to associate the interests of the peaceful inhabitants of the country with those of the national army, and so adjusting circumstances that the one should help the other. The best means of doing this was to organize an army which would know how to respect the rights of others. Only the greatest energy, activity and prestige could have been successful in effecting this change. Everything depended on the initial steps.

The army of the East was composed of a mere handful of

men when battle was first given to the traitors commanded by Visoso, who was then camped with his band in a little southern village called Tulcingo. The Army of the East, such as it was, won the day. After the victory the soldiers looted three thousand dollars in gold which had been left by the enemy in their flight, and, as was then the custom, prepared to pillage the little town.

Then, for the first time, the men were taught a lesson. General Diaz assembled his troops and prohibited all looting and disorder and exacted the return of the money which had been appropriated by the soldiery, stating that it belonged to the Nation. The Nation? No one had given a thought to it. It had seemed quite natural to follow the theory of Sancho Panza. Visoso was the one who had lost the money and they were the ones who had found it. Tact, and knowledge of his command, enabled General Diaz to compel his men to return the money, which he at once formerly turned over to the first Military Paymaster the Republic could boast of, Mr. Manuel Guerrero. In this connection it may be interesting to know that the appointment of these officials of the Finance Department, and who were not apart from the Army, served in many instances to put an end to military disorders.

In this way the Mexican Army was organized, and from that time on its annals were filled with honour and glory, from the moment of the action at the obscure little village of Tulcingo to the time when the Capital of the Republic was taken by assault and wrested from the hands of the invaders.

Another notable instance of General Diaz' ability as an organizer was the establishment of the Academy for Girls in the city of Oaxaca, which took place in the month of November, 1866, precisely at the time when his patriotism and military honour had to be devoted to the organization of the Third Army of the East, in order to be in a position to meet the formidable foreign army and its treacherous allies which occupied the capital of the country and give the final death blow to the Empire.

The important social signification of such an institution can the more readily be understood when it is known that this Academy has given a liberal education to the majority of the young women of Oaxaca of successive generations for the past forty years, and it may be added that from the date on which the institution was converted into a Normal School it has turned out and is continuing to turn out proficient school mistresses for the primary schools throughout the State.

This fact is an evidence of the perfect and admirable intuition which General Diaz has always displayed in maintaining

that it is not sufficient to be victorious on the field of battle, alone, in order to put an end to political strife. In accordance with this principle, which he discovered and proved to himself through his personal experience as a close observer, immediately after his occupation of the Capital of his native State, after his signal victory at La Carbonera, and despite the pressing demands upon his time, his first consideration was to take steps towards assuring for the future this double victory, by influencing the education of womanhood to a proper appreciation of the cause of liberty.

Thanks to this action, that Army, which today is one of the firmest and staunchest supporters of peace, not only earned the glory of a series of military triumphs but also distinguished itself by winning moral victories of an even more worthy nature. That same army was everywhere received with acclamation during the war and could always rely upon the spontaneous cooperation of the different towns and this fact in itself was the secret of its success, and the main source of its strength.

In order to give an idea of the discipline and respect shown towards the authorities and the rules of warfare, which governed the conduct of the troops under General Diaz, we may cite a noteworthy instance which enhances the glory of the victory gained at Puebla on the 2nd of April, 1867.

In accordance with his usual custom, General Diaz gave his commanders strict orders that the troops under their respective commands should remain at those points where they entered the city after the assault and that they were not to disperse in the streets or be allowed to commit excesses of any kind whatsoever, which would be punished by death. The day before the assault each commander of a column was shown the exact point to which he was assigned by means of a map of the city which was laid out before them.

These orders were obeyed to the letter, and the homes of the citizens were looked upon as sacred by those worthy soldiers of the Republic. After the assault was over Miguel Alatríste, one of the younger officers, reported to General Diaz that the Imperialist General Trujeque had taken refuge in the Carnicería drugstore. This man was an avowed traitor and had murdered the young officer's father, who, despite the chance he had to take summary vengeance, complied strictly with his duty by surrounding the place with sentinels and reporting the fact to his commanding officer. General Diaz then gave orders that Trujeque should be dragged forth from his hiding place and executed in accordance with military law.



General Jesus Gonzalez Ortega. He was commander of the corps of Army of which formed part the brigade under Colonel Diaz, which was prosecuting the cruel former-general Marquez. When general Gonzalez Ortega learned of the way in which general Diaz had won in Jalatlaco, he wrote to president Juarez as follows:

"It should be a shame for me to wear the green band (insignia of the degree of general of Brigade) if it is not conferred upon colonel Porfirio Diaz after his glorious triumph at Jalatlaco."

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The following instance is even more remarkable: The Commander of that Army, who never resorted to exactions and other irregularities in order to supply his troops, made his triumphal entry into the capital with a properly equipped and provisioned force and was still able to turn over to the Government a surplus of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars out of the expenses allowed. At the same time other commanders saw their men fall by the wayside through privation, despite the fact that they had resorted to pillage and forced loans. This lesson is a useful one, even if it is only one of contrasts. At that time it was an unheard of thing for a General in war-time to make economies, so that when Don Benito Juarez reached Mexico with the funds of his Government completely exhausted, he asked the victorious Commander in Chief of the Army of the East if he could furnish him with money. General Diaz, who on several occasions had given financial aid to the Government troops, immediately intimated his willingness to do so.

Don Benito with some hesitancy asked him if he had as much as ten thousand dollars, and was agreeably surprised to learn what the actual amount was. With this money Juarez was able to pay some of the most pressing demands upon the public purse and reward the services of certain government officials, among whom it, may be mentioned, was not the man who had been instrumental in making these economies at the cost of untold efforts and care.

A fact which is little known but well worthy of publicity, will give a better idea of the extraordinary honesty of General Diaz' administration. At the close of his first presidential term, the man who had handled enormous sums of public money was obliged to ask for a loan of eight thousand dollars from the National Bank, in order to finish the construction of his house on Humboldt street, and there were actually Directors on the Board who voted against the application of the very man who had made the existence of the Bank a possibility. However, one of the directors, Don Juan Llamedo, a Spaniard, got up in indignation and requested that the application should immediately be complied with, that he would willingly stand guarantee for it, before he would allow anyone to doubt General Diaz' solvency.

If we Mexicans could instill into our lives and actions but a particle of the spirit of order and probity to which General Diaz owes his greatest victories and those remarkable works which he has undertaken and carried to a successful finish, we would not only attain our own happiness but greatly contribute to the aggrandizement of the country.

X.

ENERGY, JUSTICE AND CLEMENCY.

"Suavity of Manner." "Firmness and
Rectitude of Principles."

The man of weak character is not only incapable of making his own fortune and attaining personal happiness, but is also a misfortune to all those who surround him by dragging them with him to ruin. Seeing that life is a cruel and perpetual struggle, and that weakness can win no victories, it is evident that one who is not energetic can not be successful in this world.

But an energy which cannot be loveable for its goodness, nor respected for its justice is repulsive and odious, ceases to be a human virtue and degenerates into mere brute instinct. Energetic men who ignore generosity and tolerance are wont to trample on the poor and sacrifice everything to their ambitions. Such men may triumph and become rulers, but at the same time bring down general execration upon themselves. They may make themselves feared, but not loved, and spoil their work, however great and good it may be, by the hatred they engender.

What is best, most admirable and worthy of imitation is the energy of those privileged beings who know how to protect the weak, uplift the fallen, guide those who are lost, encourage the faint hearted, convince those who doubt, forgive the shortcomings and overlook the weaknesses of mankind, but at the same time be inexorable towards traitors(who) are beyond redemption. Those men who use their energies in this noble and humane manner, apart from carrying out tasks which in their very magnitude appear superhuman, earn the love, gratitude and veneration of their contemporaries as well as that of posterity, and history records their deeds and names in imperishable characters.

The energy displayed by the regenerator of Mexico is of this exceptional and exemplary kind; and to that energy, tem-

pered by kindness and tolerance and ennobled by the most impartial justice, we owe our national existence, which some forty years ago was in danger of becoming engulfed in a sea of controversies, but which today is firmly established and expanding rapidly.

In those troublous times it was not that energy was lacking, but, as that displayed by the terrible Padre Miranda, by the bloodthirsty Marquez, it was an energy which defended ignoble interests, or maintained crime and rapine. All extremes are undesirable, therefore, the inflexible energy of Juarez was not human and consequently unsuited for the work of conciliation, without which national life was impossible, until some great man arose who should be "suave in manner but firm in principles."

The life work of General Diaz is an example which we should imitate in order to be energetic without making ourselves hated.

In another chapter we have already seen how he governed in Tehuantepec and how he paid treachery and intrigue with benefits. We will not look into the methods he employed in order to achieve a moral triumph for his cause with the then fanatical people of the Isthmus.

General Diaz Ordaz, Governor of the State of Oaxaca, and the military and civil superior to the then Lieutenant Colonel Diaz, wrote him privately during that war, saying: "If you shoot any more of the "patricios" you will be impeached." The reply he received was: "You can at once take whatever proceedings you see fit against me, because if I arrest any more of these same "patricios," I will certainly shoot them. I have pardoned many of them, and they mistake my leniency for fear."

Who were the "patricios" and why was it necessary to treat them with this severity? They were ferocious Zapotec Indians, bandits, not soldiers, who under the pretext of defending religion, committed murder, poisoned the wells and availed themselves of the guiles of the Tehuana women who led liberal soldiers into carefully arranged ambushades.

In this case Lieutenant Colonel Diaz could hardly be accused of being a ruthless officer who carried on a war of blood and fire. On the contrary, the same man who was inflexible towards the treacherous "patricios," risked his life, and unarmed, with no further protection than the company of the Dominican Friar, Mauricio López, went into the midst of the Juchitecos, who though fanatical were not treacherous, merely for the purpose of winning them over to the liberal cause.

Upon arriving at the plaza of Juchitan, a drunken cacique, Apolonio Jimenez, the same man who later on took part in the cowardly assassination of General Felix Diaz, proposed that they should kill this audacious peacemaker without further parley. The influence and presence of the Dominican friar was all that saved Porfirio from immediate death; only a short while before on the road a group of men had fired upon him and he had only escaped by his coolness of nerve. But nothing could intimidate this lion-hearted man, or swerve him from what he considered to be his duty. Through the aid of Friar Mauricio he explained to the elders of the place in the Zapotec language, what were the advantages and the real meaning of the Reform. He convinced them neither their beliefs nor their religion were endangered, but on the contrary they would enjoy absolute freedom of opinions and beliefs and receive every protection in their exercise of the same. His words had such an effect upon these same men of Juchitan that later on they fought for him against Cobos, who was among those who claimed to defend a religion which was attacked by none.

Objection may be made that the Juchitecos were not fighting at the time, but here is another instance: When Colonel Diaz had just received his promotion to the rank of Brigadier General after the splendid victory of Jalatlaco, an achievement which General Gonzalez Ortega looked upon as next to impossible, General Carbajal, Porfirio's immediate superior, as an example of what many of the liberal leaders of those times were capable of, was going to murder in cold blood all the officers who had been taken prisoners. The vindictive officer was about to shoot Colonel Azpeitia with his pistol, when one of the liberal captains guarding the prisoners called Porfirio's attention to what was happening, and the latter without considering for a moment that it was his superior officer, knocked the pistol from his hand and hustled him out of the courtyard. This noble instance of energy earned him Carbajal's everlasting hatred, but in compensation it won him the gratitude of his prisoners, many of whom afterwards joined the Reform, and also brought him the approval of the Commanding Officer, who congratulated him before the army when he was decorated with the green band.

Another instance of his ready and persuasive energy was when the handful of men, who then formed the nucleus of what was later to be our Army, took Tulcingo, General Diaz prevented the soldiery from sacking the village and making free with the money found there and which by right of arms belonged to the nation.

There are those, nevertheless, who doubt the clemency of General Diaz because of those necessary and rigorous acts of justice which he was obliged to put into execution. But those who entertain such doubts forget that "The life of a man is as nothing in comparison to the welfare of the State" and that "the moral code of a man's private life is distinct and independent from that of the statesman." The justifiable and necessary extermination of inveterate revolutionaries is undoubtedly the means of saving the lives of many honest useful and pacific men and is the only protection for great and valuable interests.

A convincing and admirable proof of the way in which General Diaz has invariably avoided all personal feelings of anger in political life is evidenced in his treatment of Licenciado Dublan, who offended him deeply by proposing that he should sell his services to the Imperialist cause at a time when he was preparing for the siege of Oaxaca. In his first rush of indignation he gave orders for Dublan to be placed in the death chapel, preparatory to his execution, but almost immediately pardoned him. Later on, when writing about this matter, he said:

"Fortunately Licenciado Dublan lived long enough to reinstate himself as far as it was possible, by using his clear intelligence in favour of the Republican cause at a critical moment and with best of success.

An invariable rule, which does him both honour and credit, even though it may be natural to noble and lofty minds to keep to it, is that followed by General Diaz in disdaining to avenge himself for the calumnies of the vanquished, and his generosity is inexhaustible towards those personal enemies whom perforce he has made through life. Volumes could be filled with descriptions of the generosity and magnanimity of the President of the Republic towards those who have endeavoured to vilify him, from the members of the gutter press to those who endeavoured to get the better of him by treachery and attempted murder. He has pardoned and forgotten all these matters as long as the interests of the country are not involved.

As it is impossible for us to quote the many instances of unproclaimed clemency shown by General Diaz, we shall cite a few which, besides being characteristic, are to a certain extent of interest at the present time owing to the contrast they present to the tragic events which have occurred as a result of the fierce personal ambition and the cruelty of the blood-thirsty tyrant who is oppressing the unfortunate Republic of Guatemala.

If General Diaz decided to risk everything, by throwing himself into the sea from the steamer "Havana," it was because he heard that Lieutenant Colonel Arroyo had said that he was determined to execute him as soon as he could lay hands upon him, declaring that in that way he would obtain his much desired promotion, perhaps to the rank of General, because he foresaw that if he sent the prisoner to Mexico City, the latter's prestige would save him, and that he, who had done this without knowing how to carry things to an extreme and assume the responsibility, would find himself in a serious predicament on account of his timidity of action. Without doubt, the reasoning was correct, for Lerdo would have been only too glad to have been rid of his formidable rival, by a means which would not have appeared to involve him in any responsibility.

We already know what happened. Contrary to the expectations of the ambitious Arroyo, who was disappointed in his plans as to the capture and execution of Porfirio, but not as to his promotion, later General Diaz, on seeing him among the prisoners taken after the battle of Tecuac, said:

"You are raised to the rank of Colonel, because that is the next step in your promotion, otherwise I should confer upon you the rank of General to attain which has been your ambition. Arroyo, ashamed beyond measure, thanked him for his promotion. Later on this same officer was given command of one of the Federal Army Corps.

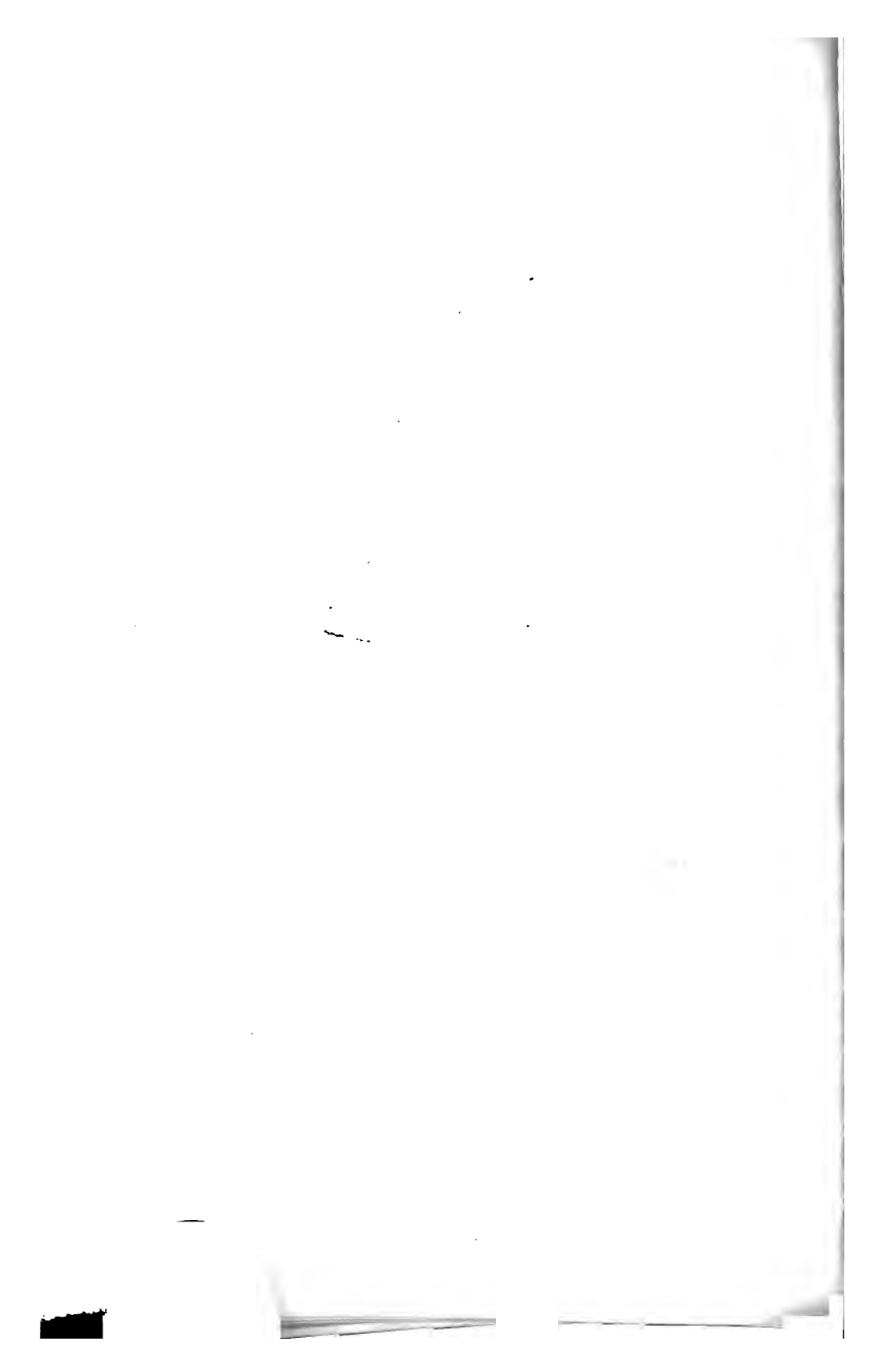
Besides, a well known General, who was also a participant in this event which happened on board the steamer "City of Havana" and who did all he could to prevent the prisoner from escaping, later on received his promotion at the hands of the very man whom he had persecuted.

It is a well known fact that General Diaz showed the same magnanimity towards his opponents at the time of La Noria and Tuxtepec, in every case, where they did not make any attempt to disturb the peace or prejudice the interests of the country. His former enemies have enjoyed absolute immunity and in many cases have been the recipients of all kinds of favours and rewards, as if they had never attacked, either with their swords or pens, the man who then showed them every consideration.

It is not so long ago that a group of corrupt and self seeking politicians whose motives were entirely despicable had some enormous stones placed on the railway track leading to Pachuca, near a bridge over which the Presidential train was to pass, so as to throw it off the track. A band of hired assassins



**Mrs. Carmen Romero Rubio de Diaz, distinguished wife of General Porfirio Diaz,
President of the United States of Mexico.**



hidden under the bridge, were to take advantage of the alarm and confusion attendant upon the accident and shoot all the passengers. Fortunately, the stones were seen in time and removed from the track, thus eliminating all further danger. Subsequently the names of the guilty parties were found out, but they were neither punished nor persecuted being allowed, on the contrary, to continue in the enjoyment of their privileges and positions.

Had this deadly and well laid plot, which had nothing of tragi-comedy about it, taken place in the Southern Republic, it would assuredly have been followed by a series of wholesale arrests and executions and a reign of terror similar to that which swept the France of 1793. Here in Mexico this attempt against the President, like many others, is but little known.

President Estrada Cabrera, with the idea common to all those of his character, thought that by defaming others he could clear himself of the obloquy of his own infamous deeds, and with this intention in mind bribed the yellow press of the United States and even the Parisian correspondents of Spanish newspapers to accuse Mexico and its President of the direst crimes, which are as false as they are absurd, none of which, however, have been given any credence, as the foreign colonies in this country have taken upon themselves to energetically refute these gross falsehoods in a way which is highly creditable to them.

Were the just indignation of the offended party ever to compel this country to declare war, the result, evident to all the world, would be the speedy annihilation of the overbearing tyrant and assassin.

But this act of retribution would cost both nations blood and money and the Guatemalan people would be the innocent victims of their ruler's wickedness. This is why General Diaz has despised and ignored the calumnies heaped upon him, and only considers now, as he has always, the welfare of the country.

This is how the flexible and humane energies of General Diaz have worked for the accomplishment of our national aggrandizement by means of unity, order and justice. In this way we may also learn how to bring happiness to those around us by tempering our energies with the saving qualities of unselfishness and generosity.

XI.

HUMILITY, TEMPERANCE AND SOBRIETY

**"Few Necessities and Simple Tastes Constitute
a Source of Strength."**

During the warm afternoons in the summer time a well set up and distinguished looking gentleman accompanied by a stately and noble lady, may often be seen walking together alone in the shady avenues which surround the Castle of Chapultepec. Both are dressed simply,

The correct attire and neatness in every detail of dress show the former to be a soldier, and a commander of the army in civilian's clothes. A glance at his companion, is sufficient to indicate that she is in every respect a "grande dame," her irreproachable good taste is evident in the most trivial detail of dress and manner. Were it not for noble aspect of the gentleman and the distinguished appearance of his companion, it would be hard to realize that here before one's eyes were one of the grandest and most powerful men of the times and his worthy consort.

Where are the gorgeous military escorts, servile courtiers and brilliantly uniformed dragoons who accompanied the Dictator Santa Anna, of unenviable fame, wherever he went? General Diaz, the great Mexican, the true democrat, has no use for these idle pretensions and showy evidences of authority. Nevertheless, the public and private life of Mexico's First Magistrate, both from a political and moral point of view, far surpasses that of any of our former rulers. General Diaz has never been dazzled by his high position, and as the years add to his fame and prestige, it would seem that his requirements become proportionately fewer.

This fact is by no means surprising, for those who know, can testify that the life of General Diaz has, from his earliest youth, been one of temperance, sobriety and humility.

It is a popular error to admire the austerities of the cloister or the convent, where temptation is of an imaginary nature and the real dangers of the world are far removed. Such

enforced virtue is, after all, but problematical and oftimes useless, unfitting those who observe such austerities to resist the first real and human temptation which is thrown in their way.

The man who, like General Diaz, held steadfastly to his principles in those licentious times was looked at askance, in the light of a "prud'homme," and a soldier, above all, was excepted to be a roysterer. To be honest, whilst others robbed and pilfered; to be good among habitual profligates; sober amidst hardened drinkers; to respect defenceless women and make others to likewise; to economize and use to the best purpose the public funds, at a time when all who could, looked upon them as legitimate plunder, and, finally to accept cheerfully subordinate positions in order to work for the country's good, are the virtues which characterized this great man.

During the wars of the Intervention his only desire was to fight in the front rank, to be where the danger was greatest; his greatest ambition, as sublime as it was disinterested, was to place the victorious national flag in the hands of the President, so that he should raise it once more over the National Palace.

We all know, but few relize, the moral significance of the reply which General Diaz invariably gives to those who congratulate him upon his great work:

"I have been helped by the best of collaborators, among whom are the Mexican People itself."

Such modesty and fair mindedness is more the exception than the rule among those who govern the destinies of nations.

Another factor which it is evident must have always had an important bearing upon the life-work and destinies of General Diaz is that of his noble and exemplary wife, who has been his loyal companion and has shared with him the joys and sorrows, victories and reverses of his eventful life.

Madame Diaz has never in any way associated herself with political matters. History shows us that, with but few exceptions, those statesmen whose wives have interfered in public affairs have generally experienced severe reverses and their home life, in consequence, has been far from happy.

The wisdom of Solomon tells us that a wise and prudent woman is a priceless treasure. Madame Diaz rules in the hearts of the Mexican people who love and admire her for the noble example she has set and for her many quiet and unostentatious acts of real charity.

There is many a man who has commenced life with every advantage in his favour and then, for no apparent reason, allowed himself to drift down the broad stream of life until, finally, his hopes and prospects were wrecked. For a moment, perhaps,

the world may stop to take notice of his affairs, and then with a few frivolous comments or a shrug of the shoulders, society goes on its way supremely indifferent. In a great number of instances the time worn French proverb "*cherchez la femme*" explains why some homes are miserable, with the result that peace and happiness had been looked for elsewhere.

The influence of a woman in her own home is, perhaps, one of the greatest restraining factors and in many instances is the only solution of the terrible problem of intemperance. "*What woman wishes, God also wishes*" was a proverb in the knighly times of the Crusades. Would that men more often remembered this great truth! The days of chivalry are past, but man will continue to be what woman makes him. In her hands, to a great extent, lies his destinies and the magic arts of love can make the home a haven of rest and comfort.

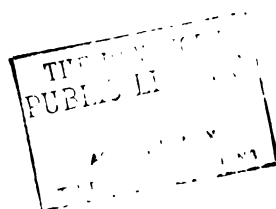
The remarkable energy and endurance which characterizes the life and works of General Diaz are to a great extent attributable to that perfect and harmonious home atmosphere and influence which Madame Diaz has known how to exercise.

The cleanness of General Diaz' life, in every respect far beyond that of most men, is too well known to need further mention, only in as far as it serves to point a valuable moral lesson. It would have been impossible for him to have accomplished the work of regenerating our corrupt political status had he not been possessed of rare and exceptional qualities of both mind and heart, and if he has not been entirely able to correct habitual dishonesty, at least he has compelled it to fall back ashamed.

The force of example is one of the most powerful and startling factors in life. The way to happiness lies in being temperate and humble. Self control is the foundation of a well spent life.



Major Porfirio Diaz, Jr. wearing the uniform of officer of the general Staff of the president of the Republic.



XII.

THE HIGHEST OF ALL DUTIES.

A Good Father and a Good Citizen.

In a quiet street in the western part of the city is an elegant but unpretentious chalet. It seems to be lost beside the elegant and ostentatious city residences which surround it, because when it was built, what is now an asphalted city street was then but a dreary waste and the scene of those frequent conflicts which took place around the neighboring "Ciudadela," which today is the artillery museum, and at a time when there was but little hope that armed conflict would ever cease, much less that the city itself would expand so wonderfully and reach that quarter as it has done. The chalet in question is modest enough in appearance, because its original owner built it at considerable personal sacrifices, despite the fact he had controlled vast sums of public money. As a recompense for the eminent services he had rendered to his country, he was content with the best of rewards: the satisfaction of a duty done.

Through the gates of the chalet may be seen a notice that cheese and butter from the Hacienda de Paté are sold there, which shows that it is the home of a careful landowner, who attends personally to his affairs. The merry sound of two strong and rosy little children playing in the garden may be heard, and they are watched by a charming young matron, whose blonde beauty and charm of expression reminds one of Lauret's paintings.

An air of happiness and well being, of work and plenty but not luxury, predominates. Such is the home of Major Porfirio Diaz, of the Engineers, the son of the President of the Republic.

Two valuable lessons may be learned by considering the circumstances, habits and manner of life of this young officer, who worthily follows in the steps of his great father and honours a name which is one of the most illustrious ones in America.

Those who have studied the lives of great men, who have enjoyed popularity and power and who have ruled the destinies of nations for long periods, know that, with rare exceptions, such men have liberally bestowed favours and high positions preferably to their own kin and usually to their friends and partisans.

In this respect, compare the conduct of Napoleon the great with that of General Diaz. The creator of modern France changed the map of Europe, scattered French gold to the winds and shed rivers of blood in order to be able to distribute kingdoms among his relatives, not excepting the incapable and celebrated "Pepe Botellas." In contrast, the son of the creator of Modern Mexico is a simple major in the Engineer's corps who passed his examinations at the Military College, completed his studies abroad, and who only reached his rank after twenty years of service. It cannot be said, therefore, that he gained his promotion through favouritism. The only other distinction he enjoys is that of being an officer of the President's staff, the only office he holds is that of deputy to the local congress of the state of Oaxaca. The few advantages which he has made for himself in his professional capacity as an engineer, without his name having served him in any way, has been in obtaining some of those contracts which come to him in the ordinary course of business. His enterprising character, like that of his father, has led him to undertake business which have enjoyed no further privileges than those extended to every one. His fondness for agricultural pursuits shows itself in the care and attention he bestows to developing his country estate along modern lines. Finally, his college honours, his diploma as an Officer of Public Instruction, the Cross of Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, conferred upon him by the French Government, as well as the Cross of the Red Eagle of Prussia and other decorations bestowed upon him by the rulers of Germany and Bavaria, are personal distinctions, which his merits and abilities have earned for him.

Many favourable comparisons could be made between General Diaz and the immortal Corso, but without doubt the one we now have before us is the most worthy of attention, because it proves his scrupulous honesty in the use of his powers, even when the interests of those nearest to him were concerned.

Whilst it is true that as a ruler he showed no favouritism towards his children, as a father he fully lived up to the highest duty, that of educating and providing for his family.

As the "greatest wealth of a country lies in its youths," provided they have received a good education, it is evident that he did his country and humanity one of the greatest ser-

vices, that of educating his children. This is the first necessity, at all times and in all places; but, at the present moment, the whole future progress of the Mexican nation lies in the hands of the fathers of families who realize the importance of this great truth and endeavour to educate their children so that they may be good citizens and good men.

General Diaz' family is an instance of how he has given them every opportunity in this respect. The daughters are model wives and highly esteemed members of society; the son is a useful public servant, an honourable and industrious gentleman and a man of action, who in every sense is a credit to his educator.

Consider the indifference of parents who make the excuse that attentions prevents them from seeing to the welfare and up-bringing of their children. Whom among them, however, has passed through those trying periods of incessant work, anxieties and heavy responsibilities which General Diaz experienced, and yet found time to look after the education of his children?

The true explanation is that children are not educated by means of money alone, nor is time the main factor, but that love and strict sense of duty which has been the guiding star in the life-work of Mexico's President.

The relations between General Diaz and his son, influenced by the virtues of love and duty, which are the bases of true education, are examples which may well be studied by all fathers and their sons.

When Major Porfirio Diaz, as an officer of the President's Staff Corps meets the Supreme Magistrate of the Nation, General Porfirio Diaz, it is with the attitude and respect of a subaltern to his superior officer, and orders are given and received with the same military observances in use throughout the army. In their private relations, the older and the younger man may be seen together in those close and affectionate ties which unite a loving father and a dutiful and worthy son.

One may paraphrase the famous Arab proverb and say: he who has not planted a tree, written a book or given to the world a son is not worthy to be called a man,—noble means, indeed, to triumph over death and live in the memories of future generations.

XIII. ACTIVITY.

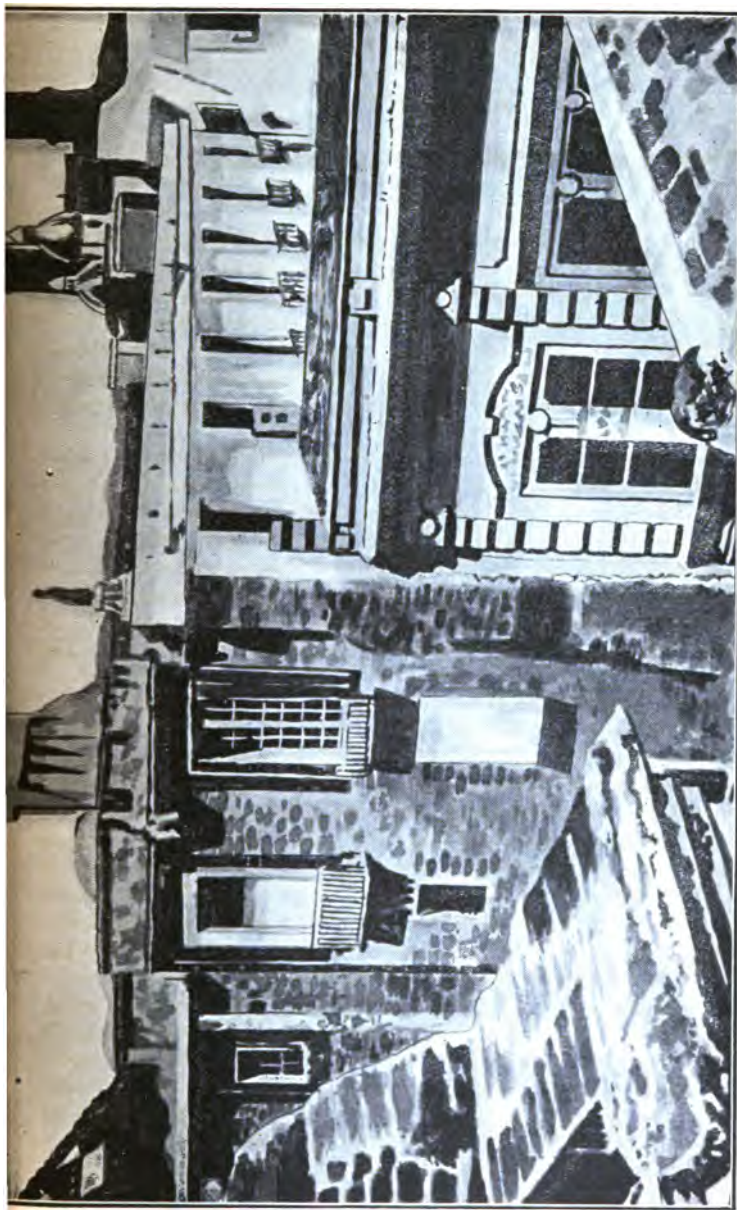
"Never Leave Till Tomorrow What Can be Done Today."

The sum total of General Diaz' achievements represented by his great military works, is truly astonishing. When one looks back and compares the revolutionary, disorganized and poverty stricken Mexico of the past with the peaceful, orderly, rich and growing Mexico of today, only the force of evidence makes it possible for us to believe that this marvellous result has been attained through the able management and untiring energy of one man alone.

It is true that he has been aided by intelligent and energetic associates, and has had the support of a people who place absolute confidence and faith in him. This, however is but a partial explanation, because it is equally true that all the great things he has done for the nation during the past thirty years, and his services devoted to the cause of independence, bear the ineffable imprint of his personality. The majority of his works are exclusively his own, both in inception and execution.

A true appreciation of the amount of work represented in the life of General Diaz is beyond the comprehension of the average man. It is sufficient to say that a man of ordinary abilities, provided he does not have the characteristic failings of imagination, indolence and sloth, would be overwhelmed by merely having to sign the mass of correspondence which President Diaz goes through every day, to say nothing of reading each letter and dictating the reply. This work, which in itself would keep most people busy, for more than quarter of a century has been looked upon as merely a part of the day's routine by Mexico's great President.

Add to this the heavy responsibilities of his exalted position, fulfilled not conscientiously alone, as this would be mere mediocrity, but as no one else could do them. Besides, take into consideration the public audiences, official and private functions and ceremonies and his own private affairs, all of which duties are attended to in the most efficient and active manner, at an age when the majority of men are incapacitated and living the monotonous routine of old age.



Convent of the Compañia at Puebla, from where General Diaz evaded for the second time in order to continue his campaign against the invaders. The statue at the bottom of the corner of the building is that of Saint Vincent, to whose pedestal the fugitive fixed the rope that served to make the descent along the wall. The height of the building gives an idea of the perils of such enterprise.

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To say that General Diaz enjoys an exceptionally strong physical constitution is only another explanation for his remarkable life. Innumerable statesmen have existed who enjoyed the esteem of their people, the able collaboration of their contemporaries and the advantages of health and strength, and, notwithstanding, have left behind them but a blurred remembrance, and, at the best, works but imperfectly accomplished.

What, therefore, is the real secret of his remarkable life, and what creative and all powerful force has he at his command?

He has been and is endowed with an extraordinary genius. But genius alone, as some people imagine, is not that divine spark which indiscriminately enters men and makes them superior to their fellows. No; genius is "an infinite capacity for taking pains" (as Carlyle has it), it is self-denial without limits, unflinching will power, activity without haste or confusion and an ardent love for and an unshakeable faith in all that is good. Genius, briefly, is the result of character, balanced, tuned and strengthened by education and an inborn tendency towards high and noble ideals.

It must be remembered that the regeneration of a country and the triumphs of science and learning which quicken progress and benefit mankind are not the only great works. Less brilliant, perhaps, but not less noble, are those ideals which lead a man to serve his country, society, his family and himself in the fulfilment of a duty.

No one is called upon to undertake what is beyond their powers. But the man who earnestly strives to be good and useful as far as his abilities will permit of, can rest assured that he will always attain much for himself and those around him.

The example of quiet, systematic and indefatigable activity displayed by General Diaz is one which could well be followed by that great number of strong young men who continually complain either that they do not find work or else what they have is too hard or poorly paid.

The reason why these youths are either not able to do their work, or else find their tasks irksome, is because they have either received no training, or else their characters unfit them for any sustained effort.

The first significant and useful lesson we learn from a study of General Diaz' life and which is a remarkable contrast to one of our most rooted national defects, is that he never has left until tomorrow what can be done today, whereas that fatal word "mañana" (tomorrow) is the great stumbling block to the majority of Mexicans. With General Diaz the

formulation of any plan of action in his mind invariably has been followed by its execution. Throughout his life we have instances of this trait in his character. But in this connection there is one important reflection to be made. To formulate an idea and then at once to proceed to carry it out without reflection and careful revision, is the height of folly and must inevitably lead to failure and ruin, because though activity requires to be supported by daring, it should at the same time be tempered by prudence and reflection.

Let us study General Diaz in the most solemn and decisive moments of his life. For instance, when he made his escape from the Caroline College. It is certain that on that occasion there was no time to lose; every minute was precious; prompt action became a necessity. However, as time used in thinking a matter carefully out before hand, and thus being certain that no mistake is made, is never time wasted, the man who was about to risk his life and the future of the nation in that escape, carefully tested the rope upon which depended his chances of flight. To use his only words, "I carefully satisfied myself of the resistance of my support."

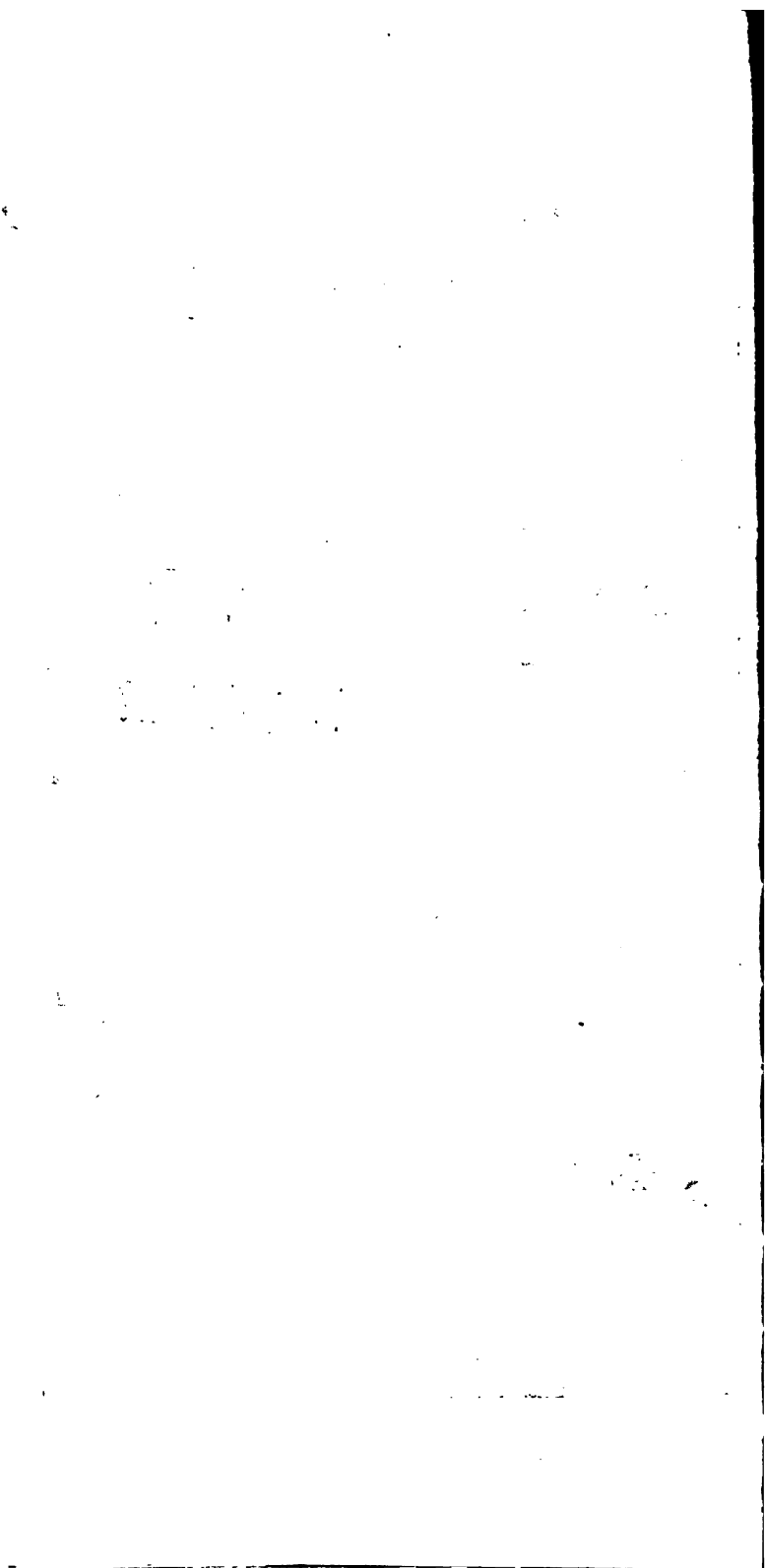
Here we have two instances of the qualities which tempered General Diaz' activity, the first: never leave until tomorrow what you can do today; the second, test the means you propose to employ before making actual use of them.

Another important characteristic of the creative activity of this great man is his daring combined in proper proportions with prudence. He who allows an opportunity to slip from his grasp through an excess of caution invariably remains behind in the race of life. It is a good thing to reason out a matter carefully and cautiously when time and place admits of it; but to hesitate at a critical moment and abstain from decisive action on account of misplaced caution infallibly leads to defeat. Had general Diaz stopped to unduly ponder over the admirable strategy which culminated in the double victory of La Carbonera and the taking of Oaxaca, he would in all probability have greatly retarded the definite triumph of the Republican cause.

General Diaz besieged Oronez, already defeated at Miahuatlan, at the convent of Santo Domingo of Oaxaca. This stronghold was at that time an impregnable position to the weakened and ill equipped forces of the besiegers. At this moment it was learned that a body of veteran Austrian troops, well armed and equipped, under the command of Count Kotze, an able Austrian officer, was advancing by forced marches upon Oaxaca. What was to be done? To await the Austrians meant to be placed between a cross fire and court certain defeat; to advance boldly to an encounter with them meant liberating



Triumphal entrance of general Díaz to the principal square of Puebla the glorious morning of the 2d. of April of 1867.
At the right side of the cut in the second plan signaled with a white cross is president Díaz riding his horse and responding to the ovations of the people.
(The above is a reproduction of an original, painting by F. Méndez, said original is hanging at the wall of the antichamber of the Hall of cabinet meetings at the Castle of Chapultepec.)



the enemy he was besieging and practically laying himself open to an attack from the rear. This situation called for daring and immediate action.

Without wasting a moment, General Diaz ordered his cavalry men to muffle the hoofs of their horses with cloth, had the guns taken off their carriages so as to avoid making any noise left his camp fires burning with sentinels posted here and there, who were to continue challenging each other just as though the army was still encamped, and then, under cover of night, marched swiftly off to meet the Austrians. He took up a position at La Carbonera, and in a battle which military critics consider a masterpiece of strategy and the only battle worthy of the name, besides the action of Miahuatlan, fought throughout that period, defeated and completely routed the enemy. He then immediately returned to his lines, taking with him the arms captured from the Austrians, and just at the moment when the besieged garrison at Santo Domingo had discovered the absence of the enemy and made a sally, he came up with them and made his victory a double one, because the Imperialists who had left the fortress were easily defeated in the panic which ensued.

This series of daring feats contrasts remarkable with the prudence displayed by that great soldier at the siege of Mexico. On that occasion, the Army of the East, which had just reconquered Puebla was too weak in numbers to surround the city, much less to make a successful assault. The besieged were still in a strong position and could easily have broken through the surrounding forces of the enemy and have dispersed through the interior, thus prolonging hostilities indefinitely.

All that was audacity and celerity of action at Oaxaca in Mexico was quiet and patient calculation; but each course of action in its place was crowned with victory.

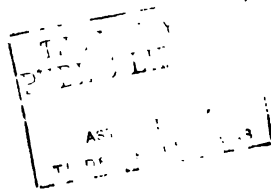
A powerful factor for success is self sacrifice when combined with activity. To work for oneself alone is both selfish and despicable and, besides, produces no good results. It is an exception for a real egotist to ever achieve anything great. Human interests are so closely identified with each other and inseparably bound together, that it is impossible to help oneself without benefitting those around one. The more we help others, the nearer we are to attaining our own happiness.

What finer example of unselfishness can we find than that of General Diaz, who has devoted his whole life to the welfare of the country, and yet at the age of seventy odd years, when asked to continue the work replies: "I will do so willingly until my last day."



SECOND PART.

THE WORK.





It is difficult to understand and almost impossible to judge the merit and real significance of a work of art, whether it be scientific or political, a sculpture, a book or a nation, without thoroughly understanding the qualities and defects, the heights and the depths of character of the author, either artist, literateur or leader. A work which is obligatory, becomes vulgarized, and is known by its motives.

As a matter of fact, a man and his works are so inseparably and intimately bound together, that only on rare and exceptional occasions is the author distinct and contrary to them. The normal healthy and usual law which is evident both in nature and life is that the son shall take after his father, and that thoughts are born of the intelligences from which they emanate. This is the reason why human beings are either perfect and good, or else deformed and perverse, in resemblance to their forebears, and in the same way there are lofty and noble ideals as well as those which are low and ignoble in accordance with the souls which give birth to them. This universal law, regulated by progressive evolution, is the basis of that complex and far reaching mechanism which preserves the race in its progress towards perfection and the consummation of a universal life.

We make this reflection because we think that this book and its objects would be but imperfect, if, after endeavouring to popularize the highest moral lessons, imbued with life and truth, and which are exemplified in the character of General Diaz, we were to omit mention of the result of those qualities, which we so strongly advise, the recompense of those virtues which we quote as examples, and, briefly, the great life work of that man, whose influence and fame have long since crossed the frontiers of our country and the wide oceans to the farthest corners of the civilized world. Were we to make this omission we would destroy the harmony and unity of that which by nature and by reason should be preserved intact and taught in its entirety, bound with the close ties which hold cause and effect together.

This same incompleteness on our part would detract from the

efficacy of the work, because virtue is its own recommendation and tends towards the common good. Therefore, in order to make a distinction between the selfish and useless virtuoso and the man who is possessed of positive qualities for all that is good and useful, we must, perforce, speak of his work, which is the undeniable proof of the altruism of his intentions, and which, besides accomplishing his own aggrandisement, brought about that of others as well.

An essential attribute of the human soul is that desire to investigate and discover the causes for any phenomena which may appeal to or attract the attention, whether they are grand or terrible, for the dangers which surround them, or the good which they may bring.

If the work of social reform achieved by General Diaz has attracted attention in Europe, on account of its far reaching and admirable nature, and this in spite of the fact that Europe is disdainful of all that does not reflect its own influence, it seems only natural and fair that as Mexicans, and, therefore, more nearly interested, we should exercise and continue to exercise our special aptitudes as critics in analyzing, judging and commenting upon the political works of our great regenerator.

Unfortunately, it is also a human law that historical events cannot be properly appreciated at their true worth, immediately after they have occurred.

The conscience of a people, like a glass, is subject to optical delusions, and is focused nearer or further away, thus distorting or misrepresenting the object. When seen near, the dark and turbulent atmosphere, associated with passions which are still active, clouds and tinges the events with exaggerated and blurred shades; whilst, when seen at a distance, mellowed by centuries, the outlines are indistinct, the details are lost to view and as the motives which gave rise to such actions are incomprehensible, but few historical characters retain in due proportions, in the course of time, their true characteristics, because the distance of a past age has spoilt the perspective.

For this reason, it is both a useful and patriotic task to

leave behind us, as time goes on, evidence, such as that accumulated in this book, which in its sincerity will be a guide to future historians when writing about this epoch, up to the present the one most worthy of study in the annals of the Mexican Republic.

For our part, if we are to make this a work of real merit, we must not follow blindly, or without previous and careful analysis, the opinions which have been expressed as to the causes leading up to the present pacification and development of the country. We find ourselves face to face with those same formidable difficulties which have obstructed and hampered the efforts of notable historians, in those matters which relate to an appreciation of contemporaneous events. We must contend, moreover, with the same chaotic abundance of contradictory evidence, and the acrimony of conflicting passions which are so misleading and conducive to errors.

The only means of avoiding mistakes in such a case, is the employment of a strict, close and impartial method of criticism, and conclusions which will not be based upon the opinions of friends and adversaries, or upon more or less hypothetical suppositions, but rather upon clearly proved facts, which are entirely beyond discussion, from whatever point of view they may be considered.

In this connection we may mention that we do not propose to write a complete history of all the works of General Diaz, because, even though we were to condense them greatly, they would exceed the limits of this book. Many and extensive works have already been made out of the purely historical facts of the past thirty years. We have already stated that this is not a historical work. It has a moral purpose in view, which is exclusively educational, and for that reason we have limited ourselves to a selection of those facts which are conducive to the end in question. We are fully aware that in order to be successful in our endeavours we need the aid of clever minds, because the works of a genius can only be truly estimated and appreciated by genius itself; but we are encouraged by the belief that what is good and noble requires little explanation and will readily appeal to the best sentiments of the reader. Above all, and without the shadow of a doubt, the life-work of General Diaz is a study in itself, both eloquent and beneficial, as well as educational.

THE DANGERS OF CIVIL WAR.

All true and sincere patriots were terribly undeceived by the bitter and prolonged struggle for power which was com-

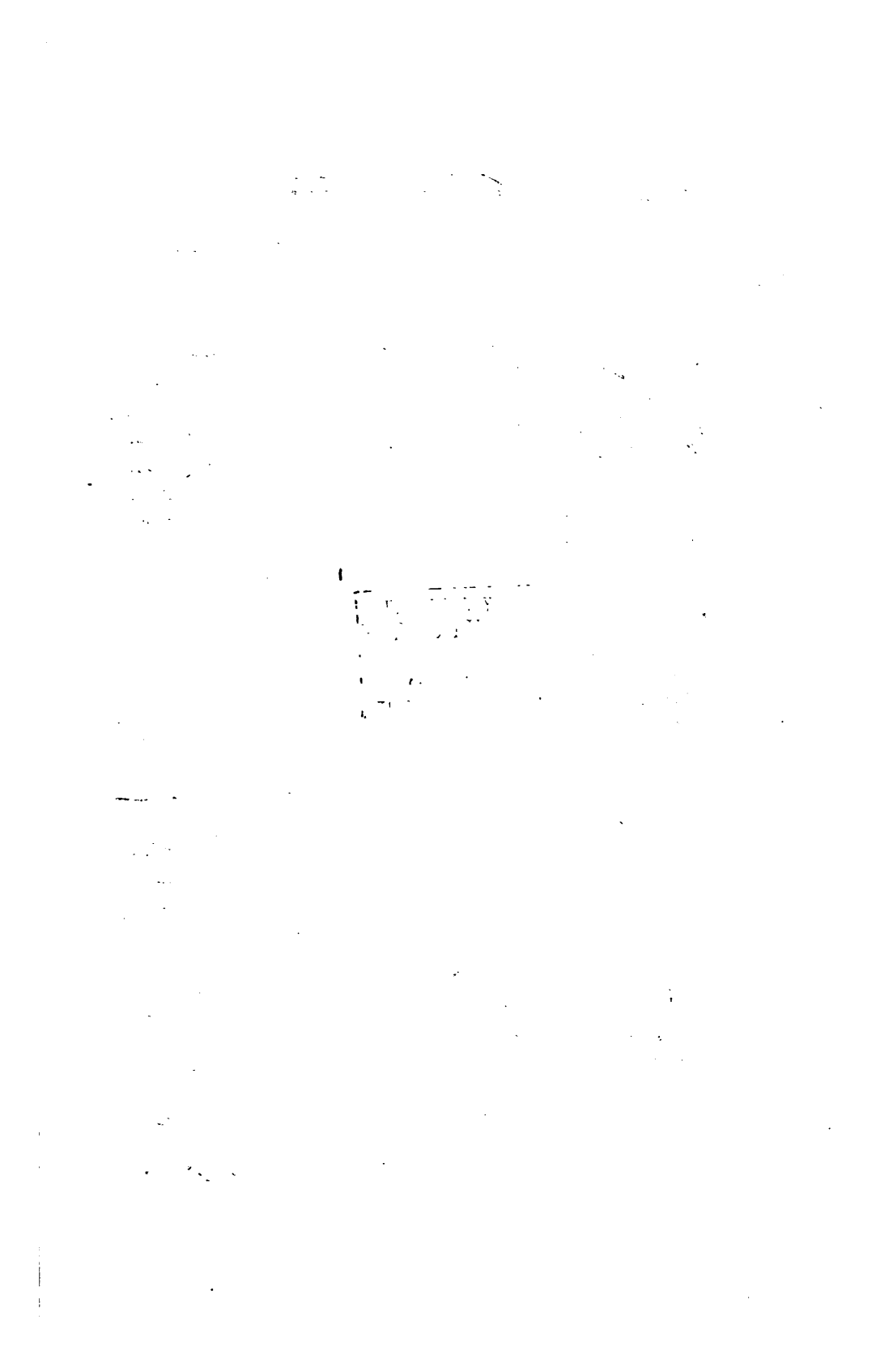
menced against President Juarez, bringing with it the most deplorable consequences, first by General González Ortega and later on by Licenciado Don Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada, when the blood which had been shed in doing away with foreign Intervention, due to our own internecine strife, was still fresh.

There were, indeed, more than sufficient grounds for despair. Up to that time there had been a reasonable explanation, a worthy excuse and a noble end which justified civil wars. The struggle then was to bring about a great social and political reform. Men fought for the triumph of great ideals and principles, such as equality before the law, liberty of conscience and liberty of work, and though in certain respects there were other and less laudable reasons for this fratricidal strife, yet the grandeur of those motives already mentioned were in themselves sufficient to justify and elevate the cause.

But once the final disorganization and downfall of the theocratic power had been accomplished, privileges abolished, liberty achieved, the wealth of the clergy confiscated, the Constitution firmly established, at the cost of thousands of victims sacrificed on the altar of freedom, and autonomy confirmed by that supreme and final act of justice which was consummated on the Cerro de las Campanas (the place of Maximilian's execution), it is evident that the recrudescence of strife among the prominent men of the liberal party, this time not for, but over, the Constitution, established a most deplorable aspect to the situation. It was no longer a question of principles, nor were the interests of the country itself at stake, but rather personal ambitions; and these electoral polemics, underhand like all those which are fostered by garrulous law makers as to the proper interpretation of a legal clause in a code, like all those causes which invariably end in revolutions, riots, bloodshed and economic disorder, were clearly seen by all thinking people to be the forerunners of even greater misfortunes than those the nation had been through during nearly half a century of anarchism.

Consequently, it was evident that the hard earned lessons of the Intervention had been wasted, that the enormous sacrifices made in the cause of reorganization were useless and that the efforts made by those who thought they were to regenerate our conditions had been without result; for the liberty which had been achieved was used as a means to self destruction. Those who had all along declared that the Mexicans were not fitted for an independent social life seemed to be justified in their opinions.

The worst of it all was that if these wars of Independence and those waged on behalf of a principle had a reasonable



Novacum Nov- 24 de 1859

L. S. D. Thiel el mismo como

Mi estimado amigo

Subiré V. que las fuerzas de Oajima también en diez cerca de Leticia y de en consecuencia el enemigo ocupó la ciudad de Oajima el día 7 del mes. La guarnición nuestra vacuó la plaza y marchó a un sector punto de la Sierra, donde el go. del Estado se ocupa de aumentar sus fuerzas.

El Subcomandante había un depósito de armas de guerra muy buenas, municiones abundantes y la mayor parte de las armas usas ya en guerra. Pienso que el mundo del Comandante de Porfirio Díaz. es un jefe de mano. ya que en la reacción no me da a quel punto tengo seguridad de que son inasistidos.

Como Subcomandante en la batalla de debe irse y el enemigo para ocupar el punto de la ciudad de Oajima y ese Estado conviene que se prepare todo lo posible. En consecuencia Hecho le suplico que se atenga en el mismo punto de todas maneras al jefe. Ya he mandado a un persona en Oajima para que la fuerza de Subcomandante que ya está en Oajima.

Por Subcomandante
Subiré V. escribiendo

Ciudad Juarez
tubimos tambien un descalabro; pero
no es de grande consecuencia contra
nuestra causa?

Diri a v el conde guardanme
Las pumas del Sr. Degollado a ultimas
fechas. estaban entre S. Luis y Guana-
juato. Como de pronto carece de apake-
ria tendria que demorarse mientras
llega a El Estero y la cantidad de
gamene calibre 7.5. un par de mil en el
Norte. Ahí se ven estan reunidos
cerca de Guadalupe mas de cinco
mil hombres de buena calidad y
un buena artilleria de 12 libras y
Gawny, Coronado Tule y Rostra.
En Chascha habia dos mil hombres
y se temian tambien un par de pumas

Por haber llegado ya el armamento
de siempre en la Excmo. Union y
por por Panamá

El Sr. D. Man. Alvarez ha
sido ya tambien el armamento
de siempre en el Norte y las comuni-
caciones seg. carrea. En fin tenemos
elementos que se anuncian a des-
ar. Quiden en letargo y se han
después de donde pueden. pueden las
armas de puente

Soy su amigo y amigo

P. D. S. M.

Benito Juarez


An interesting autograph of Benito Juarez

Which gives an idea of the importance of the services rendered by the then
major Porfirio Diaz, in the government of Tehuantepec.

ending and held out hopes of coming to a conclusion some time, however remote, either on account of a decisive victory for one or the other side, as was the case in the Reform War, or, for instance, by expulsion and defeat, as happened to the Spaniards, the French and Austrians; on the other hand, in contrast, the discord reigning among the members of the liberal party could only have but one possible outcome, and that was suicide, the loss of nationality and, perhaps, final annexation by the powerful Northern Republic, whose economic interests, prejudiced by our absurd civil wars over legalities, would soon have induced that nation to imperiously demand the pacification or control of Mexico, which is its best market and at the same time its natural provider.

The following very expressive phrase briefly illustrates the attitude of foreign statesmen towards our state of political unrest:

“When are you people going to put an end to that nest of vipers?” was the question asked of the American General, Ulysses Grant, by a certain British Minister.

ARE NATIONS ENTITLED TO COMMIT SUICIDE?

Supposing such a state of affairs had come to pass, it is sad, but necessary, to admit that we would have but little grounds for protesting against the invasion. The civilized world was on our side when we put a stop to the French Intervention, because one of the incontrovertible rights of all nations is that of self government and it was then proposed to deprive us of that liberty. But disorders of a purely personal character are nowhere sympathized with, nor does anyone attempt to justify them. For this reason other nations would have had very good excuses wherewith to put an end to our differences on practically the same principle as that which makes society snatch the pistol from the hand of a would-be suicide.

There is a perfect resemblance between some of the relations of an individual to society and those of nations among themselves and seeing that individual liberty is limited by the rights of one's fellow beings, the sovereignty of a nation may also be said to begin and end with the rights of other nations.

Reasoning on these lines we are undoubtedly raising a standard much below that which the stronger nations are accustomed to employ with their weaker neighbours when their personal interests are at stake or their avarice aroused. It is sufficient to study the history of any epoch in order to satisfy

oneself of the truth of these hard facts,—facts, indeed, which are not sufficiently well realized by Mexicans.

An examination of history is also sufficient to prove to us, in all its startling plainness, yet another and not less hard truth regarding the political events which occurred from the time when General Diaz placed in the hands of Juarez, with admirable unselfishness, the victorious flag of the Republic, until that time when he again took it from the hands of the incompetent man who was on the point of leading the nation to certain disaster. There is one thing evident in connection with that dismal era, namely, that with the exception of a few public men of irreproachable character, the immense majority of politicians only considered their own private interests, whilst those of the country were relegated to complete oblivion.

A detailed description of those events would be an unpleasant task and, above all one entirely foreign to our purpose, and which, at the present time, would seem like resurrecting the remains of an unsavoury past. Moreover, what purpose would be served in again poisoning the atmosphere of our present healthy political status by unearthing the obnoxious germs of dead and gone social jealousies, which have been forgotten. There is a sufficiency of names and dates for those who later on may need to write the history of that period of our national life. For our purpose, we may say, now more than at any other time, that a name does not constitute a fact, and what we refer to existed,—of that there is no doubt.

THE PEOPLE WERE DRAGGED INTO CIVIL WAR

From whatever point of view the last disturbances in Mexico are examined, it is as well to recognize the fact that they had no other motive or cause, other than the knowledge that the trade of war in this country was, up to that time, the only occupation which was sufficiently remunerative to men of enterprise. At the same time, however, another essential fact which is of importance, must be clearly understood: it is true that warfare was the most profitable national industry, but it was the upper classes and not the people themselves who chose to follow it. The people, the genuine suffering masses, were in most cases dragged into war against their will. Without doubt the greatest iniquity and injustice committed was that of taking the Indian away from his work in the fields, the mines and the factories, in order to sacrifice him to purely selfish ends, and this was, undoubtedly, the cause of the chronic state of bankruptcy which invariably brought about the downfall of

those military administrations, where retribution followed swiftly upon the heels of transgression.

For this reason it is absurd to suppose that the disbanding of the seventy thousand reservists, which was both necessary and expedient after the conclusion of the War of Intervention, should have been the direct cause of a return to civil strife. Where the mistake lay was in not having sent the labourer back to his work, as well as in not having turned to some useful and advantageous purpose for the national welfare the energies and activities of the leaders of those seventy thousand men, who as a matter of fact, were not really soldiers, except by force of circumstances.

It is possible to forget so soon the horrors of the press gangs? No one can believe that the Indian would willingly leave his plot of land, his plough and his hut, as, though life under those conditions was hard enough, in any case it was better than that of a private soldier in those days of misery and hardships, and without any further future than an obscure death on the field of battle, to be executed wholesale should the rising prove unsuccessful, or imprisoned for desertion. On the other hand, for the officers war meant fortune, love, glory and power. To follow the prosaic and monotonous life of a civilian was equivalent to renouncing all that contained the most brilliant opportunities for the future. But seeing that the country could not very well embark upon adventures of the kind which were attempted by the great Napoleon, as a result of the revolutionary fever in France, nor maintain an army on a war footing, which would have brought us down to an enervating state of armed peace, President Juarez ordered these officers to hang up their uniforms and patriotically return to the obscure life which had been their former sphere. This order was resented by means of armed risings as an indication to him of the inadvisability of his actions, which though highly democratic, were not human and even less politic than human.

POLITICIANS MUST BE DISTRUSTED.

There is yet another cause which explains the recrudescence of civil war after the Republic had triumphed. In the same manner in which the rank and file were carried away by their officers, the latter, in their turn, were swayed by the machinations of unscrupulous politicians and this was one of the many calamities inherited from our rotten colonial times.

In those days of "Religion and Rights," the military men of that corrupt army, created by His Supreme Highness

after his own pattern and idea, were accustomed to rise in revolt for the defence of their own cherished and substantial privileges and those of the clergy, who paid them liberally for their services. But it is impossible to confound or even compare the revolutionary chiefs of that former Army, corrupt by tradition, with the leaders who took up arms upon the termination of the War of Intervention. Even though these and all similar risings are to be censured, as seriously compromising the future of the country, there can be no doubt that the revolutionists of that later period of disorder, were morally of a much higher type than those who preceded them. In proof of this it must be remembered that the officers of the liberal army were largely made up from the best and most honourable of the Mexican youth, who had drawn the sword in the defence of their country under the inspiration of the highest ideals.

Unfortunately, the anomalous position in which these officers were left after the army had been disbanded, and the fact that they were already unfitted for a peaceful career and too far advanced in a military one to allow them to change their life, supplied the required opportunity for the politicians to make them their tools, and this circumstance was taken advantage of unscrupulously. It may be taken for granted that, with a very few exceptions, behind each military leader who was fighting over these legal quibbles, was hidden some law maker, Jacobin or conservative, who had been cheated of his ambitions.

GENERAL DIAZ LED THE PEOPLE BACK TO THEIR WORK.

The disbanding of the army was only one of many pretexts for the more or less skillful revolutions which at that time were being carried on sometimes about legal questions and at others for federalism, but which in themselves had no preponderating influence or decisive effect upon the disorders which followed those of the Second Independence. The clear and incontestable proof of this was that General Diaz, in order to maintain the situation, did not find it necessary to call to arms the seventy thousand reservists, nor to associate himself in any way with the praetorian and dissolvent militarism then existing. On the contrary, it is quite plain to us that the policy of this great soldier, in perfect harmony with the high and genuine military talent which we all know belongs to him, was always directed to strengthening and maintaining the discipline of the army, freeing the exchequer from burdensome expenses, by the re-

duction of the standing army to a number sufficient to guarantee public safety and the preservation of order; and, above all to instruct and elevate the moral standard of the officers, particularly those belonging to the higher ranks, so as to make them take their true position as the "servants" of the country, and not its "tyrants," and to be the jealous guardians and not the disturbers of the peace.

This policy which is noticeable and evident since the earliest military antecedents of General Diaz were known, prove that his convictions were sincere and utterly refute the argument that the success of the "Plan de Tuxtepec" was a triumph of militarism and brought with it a military dictatorship. This is one of the many absurd deceits which have been used to inculcate ignorant minds with feelings of doubt and dissatisfaction. One whom, like General Diaz, has not one single black mark on his military record, cannot repudiate the work of a lifetime by turning himself into a military dictator; this would not have been either logical or human, and, moreover, is not true. As a reasonable and inevitable consequence of his past military and political career, General Diaz would have been the first one to put an end to militarism. This he did; and not satisfied with his work of completely destroying its baneful influence, he even carried his great achievements further, and established, perhaps for the first time in the history of our country, a civil power on the soundest principles.

There are not lacking those who will object that a government with a military man at its head cannot be styled a purely civil one, and particularly a government that is accustomed to entrust important administrative positions to soldiers. This is a trivial objection. The characteristics of a government are the laws by which it is ruled, and it is a matter of public notoriety that under the Government of General Diaz, the Military Regulations have only been applied within their own sphere.

The fact that he has entrusted certain administrative positions to military men of merit and prestige, without any distinction of opinions, has been one of those master strokes in General Diaz' policy. By this means he diverted into peaceful channels energies whose lack of employment would have been a constant danger to the maintenance of peace, and at the same time rewarded services rendered to the country and the liberal cause which could not be overlooked, secured the obedience of aggressive characters through the discipline of work, by offering them equality before the civil law and combined their interests with those of the public welfare, which then as now and always have depended upon the preservation of order. As a complement to these measures he established an army re-

serve for distinguished generals and officers, whose energies and abilities might be utilized for military service and also converted the formidable bands of brigands and highwaymen into efficient rural guards.

In this way it will be seen that General Diaz owed his success in this great task principally to the fact that he knew how to divert into civil life the energies of all those Mexicans who up to that time through force of circumstances had no other employment or hope than that of participating in revolutionary schemes.

WAR WAS THE ONLY NATIONAL INDUSTRY.

Despite the fact that a state of peace and order were contrary to the personal interests of upstart generals and ambitious politicians, there was yet another anti-social group which was perhaps even more anxious to prolong indefinitely the disorders which were ruining the country.

This third group of agitators was made up of financiers, or rather, unscrupulous speculators, shameless money lenders and dishonest men of business who had found out that revolutionary Mexico was the best field for the realization of their doubtful but profitable schemes, and this group had, as may be imagined, acquired large interests which could not easily be thwarted.

What were these shameful interests so antagonistic to peace and, therefore, to those of the nation itself, and what were the causes which led up to this lamentable state of affairs?

Briefly outlined, they were as follows:

As the normal sources of public income were either exhausted or did not exist and each successive government continued to be deceived by the legend of the limitless natural resources of the country, onerous debts were contracted, without the least hesitation, at scandalously high rates of interest, for the purpose of financing temporary difficulties or carrying on party wars. A complete ignorance of the most elementary principles of economics led those who were capable of such great mistakes to imagine that once the opposing faction had been vanquished they would be in a position to rectify the consequences of their financial blunders. Few of them were able to discern that these were the real and immediate causes which overturn any government. There were even those who were heard to declare that the public debt was small in comparison to the natural resources of the country.

The worst feature in the whole situation was that if there

were some who contracted ruinous and oppressive debts with the honest intention of repaying them when reasonable and just hopes of victory were realized, and who made these loans because they were forced to do so through sheer necessity which after all is the best excuse, on the other hand, there were many others who encumbered and compromised the national exchequer knowing that they would in no way have to respond for the debt, nor would they be obliged to compel the country to meet its obligations, because no contracts had been made in their names.

In order to give a better idea of the disgraceful and foolhardy "operations" which unstable governments are in the habit of transacting, and which will explain better than anything else the interest which certain parties had in preventing the reestablishment of order, we may quote two typical instances which are strictly historical:

"In 1833 a business house was given four and a one eighth shares of the Tobacco Company, which were at a very high figure, in the sum of \$339,375, made up as follows:

In orders on the maritime customs, payable, 80	
per cent in cash and 20 per cent on duties.....	\$309,375
In cash, half in silver and half in copper.....	\$ 30,000
Total.....	<u>\$339,375</u>

"According to a statement made to Congress by Minister José María Bocanegra, these funds were employed as follows: \$18,000 to the army which was marching south, under the orders of General José Antonio Mejía and \$10,000 to the army under General Gabriel Valencia which had been sent to crush the revolution at Zacapoaxtla. But matters did not stop here, as instead of the \$309,375 in orders on the customs which at any rate would have freed the Exchequer of a pressing debt, credits previous to the Independence were admitted for the same value on a payment of \$36,000 in cash. In other words, securities which were probably worth more than \$500,000 were sold for \$66,000, of which part was copper money."*

Another instance was the sale of the Enseñanza Convent, which today is the Law Courts, on Cordobanes street. On one occasion the established government was forced to hurriedly leave the capital of the Republic on account of the proximity of the French army of invasion. There was not even enough money on hand to pay for the necessary expenses of that epic retreat of the constitutional power. An American financier proposed to buy the convent paying \$20,000 cash down and the remainder of the total purchase price, which was \$150,000, an outrageous figure, in bonds of a more or less doubtful

* P. Macedo.—La Hacienda Pública.

nature, but which were recognized by some former government.

This opportune proposal was accepted, and on account of the hurry with which President Juarez, his cabinet and his advisers had to make their retreat, a certain general was entrusted with the business of signing the deed of sale and receiving the money.

Many years later when this case came before the Mixed Commission of Claims, which met at Washington, by common agreement between Mexico and the United States, the only thing clear was the fact that the General in question had signed the deed of sale as attorney in the transfer of the Enseñanza convent, a circumstance which in itself established the claim. But the constituted government had not received the twenty thousand dollars, having, on the contrary, to pay later on, the credit which formed part of the agreement. The attorney stated that he had signed without receiving the money. The money lender demanded the delivery of the building, declaring that he had paid for it. The final decision was disastrous. The representative of the United States and the English arbitrator of the Claims Commission passed a resolution condemning Mexico to pay a heavy indemnity in order to re-establish its ownership to the property of the Palace of Justice.

With the exception of names, dates and amounts, in the main features this is a typical example of those "business transactions" which unscrupulous speculators had to give up once and for all as soon as General Diaz established order in public affairs and honest administrative methods.

It must not be imagined, however, for this reason that the national exchequer was the only centre of usury during that period of anarchy. The evil was of a deeper and further reaching aspect. The entire country was in the grasp of an outrageous system of money lending. Why this was so is easily explained:

The abuses committed by the temporary authorities and the leaders of the different warring factions, made heavy taxation, forced loans and the exaction of all kinds of impositions possible, thus not only frightening foreign capital away, but also causing those few in the country who still had capital to hide it away in the best possible manner. Therefore, in accordance with the inevitable law of supply and demand, those who took the risk of putting their money out, demanded and obtained fabulous rates of interest, which were willingly paid by their victims who were forced to do so on account of their urgent needs.

The risk incurred was also a further powerful and just motive, besides that of the lack of money, for an almost com-

plete standstill in all honest and beneficial undertakings. As a matter of fact no one wished to expose himself to the risk of having his estate, factory or shop, sacked or burnt, perhaps destroyed by artillery fire in one of the epic battles of that turbulent period. This state of affairs by no means constituted a favourable milieu for capitalists, who have always been practical in their views and indifferent to historical issues, where their funds were concerned. Besides, there was no need for producers as there were no consumers. However, it must be understood that though there were no consumers, it was not because the people had no needs, but because there was no money to pay for them with. Those privileged few who were able to indulge their wants were supplied by the last, but by no means least of those obnoxious anti-social groups who preyed upon the disorder of the times—the smugglers.

In this connection it is only right to state so as to better describe the importance of their interests and the efforts they made to defend them, that this class was not composed of reckless criminals who earned a living by defying the customs officers, but were at the head of large business houses, established at the different frontier points and even in the capital itself, using high sounding firm names, some of which are still in existence, and who had millions of dollars passing through their hands, without making any particular secret of the illegal traffic which accounted for their prosperity.

In brief, it is quite evident that this state of anarchy made the existence of peaceful, lawful and normal industries an impossibility as well as those pursuits which make an industrious and peaceful man wealthy and benefit national welfare. On the other hand, as a natural and inevitable outcome of existing conditions, the business of strife, immorality and dissolution were the only apparent sources of energy in those times.

The logical outcome of this fact was that as the exploiters of anarchy were not prepared to willingly give up the advantages accruing from their reprehensible traffic, they opposed any attempt at pacification with all the considerable resources at their disposal by bribing governors and corrupt authorities, encouraging conspiracies and intrigues, reviving international difficulties and conflicts, and, lastly, by providing funds, without distinction, to the different warring factions in such a manner as to bring about the downfall of those who would appeal to lawful arbitration.

The foregoing conditions were a corollary to the mad speculation which we have endeavoured to outline in this chapter, and which constituted the most formidable obstacles which General Diaz had to remove and adjust in order to carry into effect his work of regeneration. As a matter of fact, he gained

his object by putting an end to the wholesale robbery of public funds which had been going on, by prohibiting "business operations" with money lenders, by raising the moral standard of public officials and by offering every guarantee for the safeguard of personal property, enterprise and capital, whether it were foreign or local.

MEXICO FOR THE MEXICANS.

In the foregoing chapters the conflict of interests which gave rise to some of the most serious causes for national anarchy have been superficially outlined. These conflicts appeared to have no end, seeing that a state of peace would bring with it the inevitable ruin, poverty and obscurity of certain numerous and influential groups of Mexicans, who then constituted the governing classes, for the lack or incapacity of those who should have held those important positions. We will try to give an idea of the conflict of political and economical opinions and principles which was the main factor in contributing towards that deplorable state of disorder prevalent, in every way disastrous and prejudicial to our incipient local and national existence.

As regards political factions it must be remembered that the two parties, by tradition opposed to each other, the Jacobins and the Conservatives, continued to carry on a bitter warfare, immediately following the reestablishment of the Republic and despite the fact that the liberal party had triumphed. The former party, flushed with victory, given over to childish vanities and considering that nothing was good enough to pay for its loyalty and sacrifices, nor sufficiently humiliating for the punishment of the opposing party; the latter, conquered, but not convinced, and with some justice on its side, as no one could believe in a liberalism which endeavoured to support the theory: accept our opinions or else be an outcast from our common fatherland.

These facts can have but one explanation which is amply proved by the events of the last thirty years. The real and human cause for the struggle between these opposing factions was, above all, more a question of personal interest than one of principle. The victors, whether partisans of the Green or the Red faction would inevitably make themselves masters of the public administration, thus depriving the losing side of any management in affairs.

Only a statesman of a really liberal genius, could have grasped the situation at that time when the overwhelming deceptions experienced by the more moderate and honourable Con-

servatives regarding theocracy and monarchy, were still fresh in their minds. It may be said that it was the exact and psychological moment to insure victory and permanently establish the work of our liberators, by uniting all honourable Mexicans in one noble aspiration: the triumph of the nation and the elimination of party strife. It is obvious that this great work could only have been accomplished by the cooperation of all our national energies and resources, without distinction as to political beliefs and principles.

Juarez, whose resolute and strictly honest character was hampered by the exactions and obligations of his party, was not fitted for the work of bringing together and conciliating the different opposing elements. It is a natural and inevitable law of compensation that men should have those defects corresponding to their greater qualities. It can, therefore, be realized that the bitter and prolonged strife maintained by the Reform leader, must have even further hardened his character, to say nothing of those implacable enemies he made on account of his work, thus unfitting him for a task of love and peace. It is but just to admit that Juarez endeavoured to carry out these ideas with the energy and singleness which characterized all his actions, and besides, he personally showed proofs of moderation. It must be borne in mind however, that Juarez, lenient to a fault in his conception of democracy and with the idea uppermost of proving by his observances the principles which he upheld, was weak on certain occasions in the face of the exactions of his party. Though there are many who consider it to be paradoxical to credit Juarez with any weakness, the instance to which we refer is precisely one of those logical and fatal counterparts to all inflexible and determined characters.

The intolerance shown towards the honest and capable members of the conservative party for several years after the triumph of the Republican cause was a grave mistake which caused a great deal of bloodshed and even more in the way of money. Men in those days were not judged by their merits, but by the opinions they upheld or pretended to uphold. The vulgar policy of "sweeping in all that came along" then obtaining, was one of the worst which could have been adopted, because "sweepings" the world over have been only too plentiful. Accordingly, all those who declared themselves to be pronounced liberals, vainglorious radicals, time-servers with "convictions," and those who were adepts in voicing the inflammatory exhortations replete with phrases, supplied from the French revolutionary literature, were sure of attaining a position of prominence in that world of extraordinary politicians, charlatans and blusterers.

It may easily be understood, therefore, that public affairs were in a perilous condition, as those who were in charge were managing their administration in French, that is to say, with imported ideas as little understood as they were inapplicable to our circumstances. This is why sometimes, for apparently no reason whatever, latter day politicians and those who were actually in power often came to loggerheads and sank to a common level both in their aims and conduct, because with the shibboleth of the "people and the country" as their everlasting war cry, they never really looked after the true interests of either one or the other, nor in return received the moral support and sympathy of either.

Such trivialities are characteristic of the infancy of a nation, which, as was the case with the Mexican nation, learn their first lessons from the sentimental anecdotes of the so called dilettante citizens of Greece and Rome, whose ideas were distorted and revived by the fanatical demagogues, who, in the name of Liberty, organized and maintained the "Terror of '93," by extolling the virtues, and at the same time mercilessly slaughtering all those who refused to assimilate their ideas.

The inquisitors of Mexican Liberalism, who had apparently divided the nation against itself beyond reconciliation, were worthy disciplines of their masters. In the same way in which the immortal Don Quijote used his talent in an effort to hold knight errantry up to ridicule, so certain "fathers of the country" had no further aims than those of copying the language and gestures of Greek, Roman and Terrorist citizens whose actions served them as models. The parliamentary records of the period stand as silent but eloquent witnesses of this fact. That the country itself was bleeding to death in the sinister grip of those savage bands of revolutionaries who were masters of the land, was but of little importance beside the necessity of acting the part prescribed and listening to the applause which greeted each wordy harangue characteristic of the Congress chamber during the times of the great Juarez, the latter years of whose life were embittered by the continual struggle he was obliged to maintain in an effort to change the order of things.

By what has already been explained, it may be better understood that in order to successfully carry out the grand and beneficent mission of creating a "United Mexico," a strong, energetic, but withal flexible character, such as that of General Diaz, was required. Above all, what was urgently needed was a political genius whose intellect would not be obfuscated by the metaphysical disquisitions which were then all the rage. The crying need was for a man whose mind was unbiased by the rancour of the vanquished, or the pride of the victors. In brief, one whose antecedents would be a guarantee for equality

and moderation and who would at the same time be inflexible in his determination to uphold the best principles of true Liberalism.

General Diaz, in every respect was the man who combined these rare qualities, because during that terrible period his life had been spent on the field of action, far from those centres of corrupt politics, in close and perfect touch with that suffering and resigned people whose name was held up to obloquy. It is certain that from the lessons a soldier's life had taught him, he was able to formulate that saving maxim which put an end to all fratricidal strife: Mexico for all Mexicans.

ONE FOR ALL AND ALL FOR ONE.

The state of affairs which we have described in the foregoing chapters were certainly productive of social anarchy and ruin. There was, however, an even more formidable obstacle which raised its menacing proportions among the people and prevented them from uniting for the common weal. This consisted of a false and exaggerated idea of Federalism, in itself an excellent thing, but for us, until quite recently, one of those various symptoms of an inherent weakness from which we are still suffering: provincialism.

In order to establish this assertion we have to go back to the times which antedate the conquest, when, under the "Mexic" rule, the central and a great part of the northern portion of the American continent was inhabited by numerous tribes who were divided against themselves far more by their irreconcilable conflict of interests and traditional feuds than by the enormous distances which separated them and their difference in customs and creeds. The only tie which bound these heterogeneous races together was their hatred of the odious tribute of blood and money exacted from them by their common oppressor. It is obvious that such a yoke could not but create an ardent desire among those tribes to obtain their freedom at the earliest possible moment.

When the Spanish rule took the place of the "Mexic" regime, the conquerors were afraid that the native tribes would unite in an effort to obtain their freedom. To avoid this, with machiavellic cunning prompted by greed, from the very first, they resorted to the effective and classic scheme of inciting the hatred and antagonism which divided the vanquished, and endeavoured to prevent all intercourse among them. In a word, they followed the plan of dividing one tribe against the other, so that they might the more easily control the situation. Such appears to have been the fixed idea which underlay the col-

onial policy if we are to judge by the methods which prevailed in the administration of the conquered country. Their characteristic feature was to preserve, under new names, the tyrannical institutions of the "Mexic" dynasty, some of which became even more oppressive and iniquitous than of old. The division of the viceregal government into provinces and captaincies, some of them directly subject to the Crown, as the general Captaincy of Yucatan, for instance; the tedious system of officialism and the heavy burdens imposed upon home and foreign trade, and, worst of all, the manner and system in which the taxes were collected, proved exceedingly efficacious in maintaining the rivalry and isolation of the vanquished tribes. This inhuman and retrograde policy was greatly facilitated by the nature and extent of the country itself, which have always been the most serious natural obstacles in the way of national unity.

Such was the soil in which was sown the seed of Federalism, almost immediately following upon emancipation from the rapacious and unscrupulous colonial regime. It will readily be understood that when the stirring words of Liberty and Independence were first heard throughout the land, the people, little or not at all prepared for the task of Federal government, in its noble, useful and beneficent sense, took it to be a signal triumph of provincialism and freedom from all duties and obligations towards the hated central power; for it mattered little, as far as the provincialists of that period were concerned, whether the central government was called the Nation, the Metropolis, the President, the King or the Emperor. The fact remained that the accumulated hatred of centuries of slaves showed itself towards the unfeeling and hard oppressors who had ruled them in the past.

The keen insight and practical common sense of General Diaz must have led him to discern this dangerous but logical state of mind into which the various and conflicting factions of the Mexican people had fallen. This was understood by him when, as a leader without followers and a commander without troops, he wandered from state to state, suffering bitter disappointments in search of help to defend the fatherland in the name of the Federal Government, which was at that time holding its own in a corner of the northern part of the Republic.

It would be a serious injustice not to recognize that in case of foreign invasion, the greater part of our people have always given heroic and exemplary proofs of unity of patriotism and discipline towards the constituted government. Unfortunately, this cannot be said of the governing classes, or of the Republican party, who, even during most critical moments of the

struggle against the Intervention, were not able to set aside their provincial rivalries and forget local animosities. From the foregoing, it may easily be imagined what they were capable of when, after the expulsion of a foreign enemy, anarchy prevailed on the score of petty quibbles.

Incidents such as the one which we are about to relate, must have been to a discerning and observing mind, like that of General Diaz, clear and palpable revelations of the false idea of federalism which then prevailed and of the fatal consequences which would inevitably occur should similar errors not be corrected.

On reaching his native state, after his first escape from Puebla, he went invested with ample powers for the purpose of reorganizing the army and thus resuming the campaign; but the Governor of Oaxaca, Don Ramón Cajiga and his secretary, Don José Esperón, resolutely opposed the plans of the Federal Government, shielding themselves by the pretext of the sovereignty of their state and without any attempt at subterfuge declaring that the personal interests of the state itself called for absolute neutrality in the face of foreign invasion. Later on General Diaz learnt that Cajiga had come to an understanding with the French commander at Tehuacan, and that on the strength of this agreement General Félix had been ordered to attack the liberal forces at Venta Salada.

When the invaders had been expelled and the Republican cause triumphed, discord among the federalists became more acute than ever, and this state of affairs was aggravated and taken advantage of by the ambitious leaders of those times, aided by the impunity afforded them on account of the lack of means of communication, the unscrupulousness of certain military men and the poverty of the national exchequer. These were chronic conditions and were thought to be beyond remedy. Thus, the supreme government found itself powerless to check and keep under control the insolent and turbulent faction leaders, who practically made it appear in the light of a burlesque government. Things reached such a pass, that on one occasion a certain famous frontier potentate, who had been officially called upon by the War Office of the Juarez Government to answer for his conduct, replied by telegraph in the most insolent manner. This action on his part had to be passed by in silence and without the reprimand of which it was deserving.

Had there been no one to apply a remedy to this serious and complicated state of disorder, the ultimate fate of Mexico would have resulted in her dismemberment into a handful of petty, incompetent and rebellious little Republics, a catastrophe which would have been all the more possible, as out of this division would have resulted separate nations, (more is the

irony), without comparison stronger, bigger and of more importance than those Central American states which now present a far from edifying spectacle.

Fortunately for us, General Diaz was able to foresee with his unerring intuition, both the danger itself as well as the means by which it could be averted. This remedy lay in the construction of railway and telegraph lines which would connect and place in closer contact with each other the most widely separated districts, thus teaching the people to love, respect and freely comply with the maxim of "One for all and all for one," a noble ideal, indeed, for those who ratified it in the name of the Mexican nation, at a time when the different elements in the land mutually ignored and even hated each other.

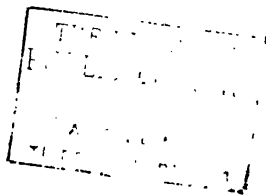
The well meaning but unpractical statesmen who established the Federal regimen during the first years of Independence hardly realized that the maxim of "E pluribus Unum," which was their dream, was Utopian in its conception and contained the germs of dissolution,—given the conditions which then prevailed.

Consequently, they merely gave us an ideal which had to be attained, but which as often as not served as a cause for rebellion, and for that reason was looked upon as being beyond reach. The truth of the matter is that it was General Diaz, alone, who made federalism possible and transformed it from something disastrous and artificial into a reality which was both beneficial and lofty, by eliminating the cause for discord, shortening distances, establishing common interests, justly distributing taxation, identifying the fortunes and the personal pride of all Mexicans, from all parts of the country and of all opinions, with the destinies of the nation and, finally, by definitely proving to all the advantages of unity and concerted action, which up to that time had been but empty words and meaningless hopes.

The unity of all Mexicans. This was the fundamental basis of the policy followed by General Diaz, an ideal which in the truest sense of the word ennobled his whole life, was the essence of his administration, the foundation to all his works and the origin of all those advantages which Mexico now enjoys: an infallible and real ideal, because Unity is Strength and Strength is Life!

A DESPERATE STATE OF AFFAIRS.

As a consequence of those disturbing factors which we have already considered, and others which are not relevant to the case, either on account of their insignificance, or because they do not come within the scope of this book, the position in which



the Republic found itself at the close of the war of Intervention, was both dangerous and desperate. True, the conservative party, which was then and is even now blamed as being solely responsible for all those disorders which were stirring up the country, had been left powerless; the reform movement had become an accomplished fact, and lastly, national autonomy had once again been upheld in a decisive and definite manner. But at what price?

The actual condition in Mexico, shortly after the country had achieved that glorious series of triumphs, was exactly that of a patient who had gone through one of those operations which surgeons cynically refer to as being "successful," because the latter are thereby enabled to immediately remove a tumour, or amputate a gangrened limb; but these operations, on the other hand, invariably end in failure, inasmuch as they involve the death of the patient, either through nervous exhaustion or by blood poisoning. We imagined that we would attain a normal condition by ridding ourselves of those factors which made us to think and act three centuries behind our times. By casting away from us the corrupt army which Santa Anna had left as a heritage, and by expelling the emissaries of Napoleon, we imagined that the root of our infirmity had been radically exterminated, whilst, in truth, we resembled a man who had substituted the amputated members of his anatomy with excellent false limbs of foreign manufacture, upon which he had pinned his faith and hopes of life. According to the surgeons, these operations were urgently necessary and had been performed with extraordinary ability. From a professional point of view, we were to be congratulated; but nature, which apparently loves to mock at surgery, took this opportunity to remind us that she abhorred extremes.

For the time being, we had established our autonomy, but at the cost of complete isolation, or in other words by being placed in quarantine, as with the exception of the uncertain and interested friendship of the United States, the rest of the civilised world looked upon us with horror and disgust, apparently because we had dared to shed the blood of a prince, but in reality because no one wished to deal with a nation which refused to pay its debts, offered no protection to foreigners or their interests, repudiated all just and legal claims by an appeal to arms, and whose integrity was maintained by the systematic protection of the United States.

It is necessary to admit that though this opinion may not have been altogether justified, still, such was the view taken of us by the European world.

We relied upon the efficacy of our newly established institutions, with the disappointing result that, like ready made

clothes which do not fit and are consequently too big, as well as on account of the drain upon our strength, those institutions, instead of proving advantageous and elevating, were converted into sources of endless controversies and quarrels. Moreover, the situation was aggravated by the fact that instead of there being two distinct parties struggling for a supremacy in ideas, men of the same opinion were engaged in a deplorable strife with no better object in view than the attainment of personal ambitions.

Finally, we had heroically submitted to extreme remedies for the purpose of eliminating those sources of discord which hampered us, only to find that the trouble had become an incurable malady which was poisoning the whole of our national life, due to a lack of high ideals and lofty motives, which had caused us to keep up the wrangle over Constitutional points.

From these facts, the evidences of which could not be denied, arose the belief that this state of affairs would inevitably lead to ruin, and, as a logical outcome, to the ultimate extinction of Mexican nationality. Only the ignorant were deceived by the pretext that legal issues were a justifiable reason and cause for the latest disorders which had torn the country. A close observer of current events, however, could easily see that there were other and graver reasons for the existence of these troublous times,—among which were those already explained,—because it is evident that if a healthy and robust constitution is impervious to contagion, then ambitious self seekers would have found no joint in our armour, had it not been for the debilitated state of the country, nor would the occasion have been a propitious one for them to exercise their attributes as noxious microbes.

With the exception of General Diaz, no one had discovered in time the proper remedy which was applicable to the troubles of that trying period, and even should there have been those who knew, it is obvious that either they could not, or would not, make use of their knowledge.

THE LIBERAL PARTY HAD FULFILLED ITS MISSION.

It would be a grave injustice and even graver ingratitude to accuse the leaders of the Liberal Party of being irresponsible for the condition of the Republic, immediately after the Reform had been accomplished and national autonomy attained. Such a course of action would be equivalent to calling the doctor an assassin, who, with the best of intentions had complied with his duty according to his scientific knowledge.

The great Mexican liberal leaders of the time devoted their lives and best efforts to their noble cause and always acted with good faith and irreproachable honesty. For this reason they were worthy of the highest respect and veneration, even though they might have been mistaken, which, however, was not the case. Above all, their disinterestedness was highly laudable, because whilst an adventurer would have looked to his own welfare, those Paladins who fought for liberty and law and the redemption of our social fabric, were not guiltless of shedding innocent blood, but were above taking advantage of those great fortunes which were theirs had they wished to sieze them.

It would, therefore, be an iniquity to reproach them with not having pacified and reorganized the country, after having reformed the absurd institutions in power and guaranteed our threatened nationality. They did more than enough in giving us our liberty, without our having the right to demand of them the way in which we should make use of the privilege. Nevertheless, even this they attempted to show us in the brief respites they had from the Homeric struggle which occupied their entire lives; but these spare moments were not sufficient to carry out the accomplishment of such an arduous and protracted task, nor were the great heroes of the revolutions, who were hated by many, ever able to apply themselves to a work of peace which called for a harmony of ideas combined with more settled conditions.

In order to silence once and for all time any blame which may be imputed to the leaders of the Reform, it must be realized that the work commenced and finished by them in a little more than a decade has required centuries of strife and bloodshed to attain in the Old World, and has taken the lives of many prominent politicians, and even then the work has not been consummated and firmly established as it has been in our country. Why, therefore, should we belittle the immense work achieved by our liberals and complain of the tremendous crisis to which reference has been made? Besides, it must not be forgotten that some of the wrongs from which the country was suffering, which, though they were among the most serious, were nevertheless not brought about as a consequence of the Reform, but existed long before that period, and only assumed more formidable proportions during that troublous time, because they had to be ignored as perils of a lesser nature compared with that which threatened our country with extinction.

In conclusion, the leaders of the Reform movement had good reason to feel their strength exhausted by the superhuman efforts they made in accomplishing the reestablishment of the Republic; but, even supposing that they had been full of energy and desire to continue working for the attainment of the public welfare in these respects, we must repeat, that their education, ideas, convictions, their whole life and, above all, the animosities which they had to combat, but which they could not efface even by their death, unfitted them for the task. Therefore, their lofty and arduous mission had been fulfilled.

A NATION CANNOT BE GOVERNED BY BOOK LORE.

We have already said that the education of the politicians of that period was the cause of administrative failures. As a matter of fact, with the exception of Juarez, and a limited number of his contemporaries, who showed their great administrative qualities, (which were unfortunately not utilized by the country, partly through force of circumstances and partly on account of those illustrious men towards turbulent and irrational demagogues), they allowed the latter to act, as they considered that their own inherent defects of education unfitted them for the task of government. This is by no means a reproach, because no one is obliged to be a genius, or to know that which has not been taught him; and it is a deplorable fact that the very knowledge which was indispensable to the statesman of those times, was substituted by a mass of worthless theoretical abstractions, veneered with romanticism, which

permeated the policy of the country during the Nineteenth Century and which characterized the actions of many of the European celebrities of that same period, who were taken as models by us.

It may confidently be asserted, without any exaggeration, that the errors of those ignorant and dishonest governments, which came into power during that half century of strife following upon the achievement of our Independence, and the failures of those few honest and patriotic governments which held office in that same epoch, were primarily due to one of those three facts or else to all three simultaneously:

The purely subjective literary and artificial idea of the people which was then the fashion among the Cabinet Ministers of those times was entirely unsuited to the Masses, who were in no way educated up to the principles of the Reform.

The mistaken interpretation which for a long time was given, and which many even yet give, to the statement of the popular and eloquent Baron de Humboldt, regarding the vast natural resources of our country in confounding the actual production of the country with what it is capable of producing.

Lastly, on account of the wide extent of the national territory which from its topographical conditions, was even more difficult of access, due to an entire lack of means of communication.

Consequently, a ruler was urgently needed whose common sense had not been ruined by theory, nor biased by party sentiments, nor whose mind was influenced with those absurdly Utopian ideas, which have never been applicable in reality. Such a man, only, could undertake the task of pacifying and reorganizing the Republic.

The crying need in Mexico was for a leader, a man of action and not a dreamer, one who had lived in close touch with the people, and who, besides being one of them, had a profound and practical knowledge of the virtues and shortcomings which are peculiar to the Mexican People, and which make them different, for instance, to the French and English. Juarez was of the people, but despite this fact, did not know them sufficiently well, because from his earliest years he had been taken from humble surroundings and, in pursuance of his destiny, had come identified with the politics of the country and absorbed in vital questions involving constitutional and international issues, which occupied the whole of his time and powerful intellect.

What we then needed was the far sighted intelligence of one who understood the complexities of our national life, who re-

alized them through personal experiences and who, consequently, would be able to form a proper estimate of our vast natural resources, and the obstacles which nature herself has placed in the way of those who are ready to develop them. These obstacles exist and are the cause of perplexities, here in our land as in all parts of the world, despite whatever optimistic and flattering legends may be entertained to the contrary.

We needed an active and able organizer who was thoroughly well acquainted with every part of our extensive territory, by reason of his many battles and expeditions to the furthest points in this Republic, and who realized what it cost to travel and maintain communications in such a country, not by diligence, with an escort and well supplied with every comfort in the way of provisions and equipment, as was the custom of the generals and potentates of those times, but on horseback, when feasible, and more often on foot, with the responsibility, always lived up to, of hurrying forward a body of troops to the scene of action in time, or safeguarding some important convoy long distances across inaccessible mountains, dreary deserts and through impenetrable forests.

GENERAL DIAZ MADE THE DEMOCRATIC IDEAL A REALITY.

Only because he possessed those qualities which we have enumerated, without taking into consideration his other moral attributes, General Diaz was predestined to triumph in the accomplishment of this stupendous task of national reorganization.

But, it may be objected, did not General Diaz have the same defects in education which were common to his times.

It is true that he might have them, but as it happened he did not, because, as everyone knows, it is a privilege of genius to free itself of all deterrent influences to be superior to the times to obtain that knowledge which is not ready at hand, and briefly to conquer those difficulties and overcome those obstacles which would dismay ordinary men and induce them to relinquish the task.

This is why General Diaz did not limit himself to studying the requirements of an imaginary People in the text books of the Institute of Sciences of Oaxaca where he completed his studies for a legal career, nor did he waste any time in poring over those foreign books which were then all the vogue. Neither of these courses would have satisfied his thirst for truth and love of justice. Instead, he resorted to that great book of Direct and Personal Observation, that so few know how to

study, and from those pages, through years of sorrow and misery, he learnt the lesson and found out the real and crying needs of the Mexican People, about whom up to that time no trustworthy book had been written.

The immortal Don Quijote, the veteran of the battle of Lepanto, wisely said: "He who travels much, sees and learns much." Here we have the natural, simple and logical explanation of the extraordinary success of General Diaz as a pacifier. Doubtless, on his long expeditions to all parts of the country under the most trying conditions, he must have formed a clear idea in his mind as to what the People most required, what they should receive and what could be expected of them. In this manner, wandering from the Rio Bravo to the Usumacinta, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, General Diaz proved to himself the fallacy of our wealth and realized that the wave of a magician's wand was needed before these dormant resources could be freed and the intricate problem of national life be solved. What was needed were: Unity and protection of property, from a moral point of view; proper means of communication, irrigation and peaceful labour, from a material point of view. As for the capital, this would come of itself along with the other blessings, and in proof, it has come into the country and continues to do so with greater confidence.

That General Diaz was not mistaken is evidenced in the credit and respect which the country now enjoys abroad; in the astonishing and uniform progress in all lines of national industries; in the enormous increase in public wealth, and, above all, in the welfare of the working classes.

As regards those disturbances which originated over legal questions and which could only lead ultimately to poverty, General Diaz came to the conclusion, by the same means of reasoning which he had always employed—common sense—and before other statesmen had solved the problem, that the only way to untie the knot was to substitute suitable laws for those which were unsuitable, and that, in reality, laws were either good, in so far as they kept pace with the spirit of the times, or else bad, because they held to old and traditional errors which tended to preserve prejudicial social conditions.

An intimate knowledge of what the country needed in this respect was one among the many facts which accounted for General Diaz' success in the work of regeneration.

Whenever he is congratulated for the results of his political work, he modestly declines to take the entire credit of victory to himself but declares that the people themselves helped him. This is undoubtedly quite true, but the real merit lies with him who knew how to unite the people in the furtherance of his purpose. The success of a ruler lies in his ability to guide and

direct into proper channels the aspirations of his people, whereas coercion would be the gravest folly, and action an impossibility, were the nation dead to its own interests.

To govern with a people and not against them; adapt the Latin maxim that "the individual belongs to the nation" to its Anglo-Saxon opposite, "the nation belongs to the individual;" to substitute politics by administration, these are the means which he employed in the pacification of the country, and by which he obtained the cooperation of the People. It is evident that an administration which works for the common welfare, without distinction of class or opinions, is the surest and noblest manner in which to attain the democratic ideal.

WHAT WERE GENERAL DIAZ' ASPIRATIONS?

This is the often repeated question which has been asked by those who would discover a weak point in the patriotism of the regenerator of Mexico, whose mind is above all considerations of fame, ambition and self.

This is a question which is of vital importance to all Mexicans and we will therefore endeavour to refute those subtle insinuations which have been made as to the integrity of his intentions.

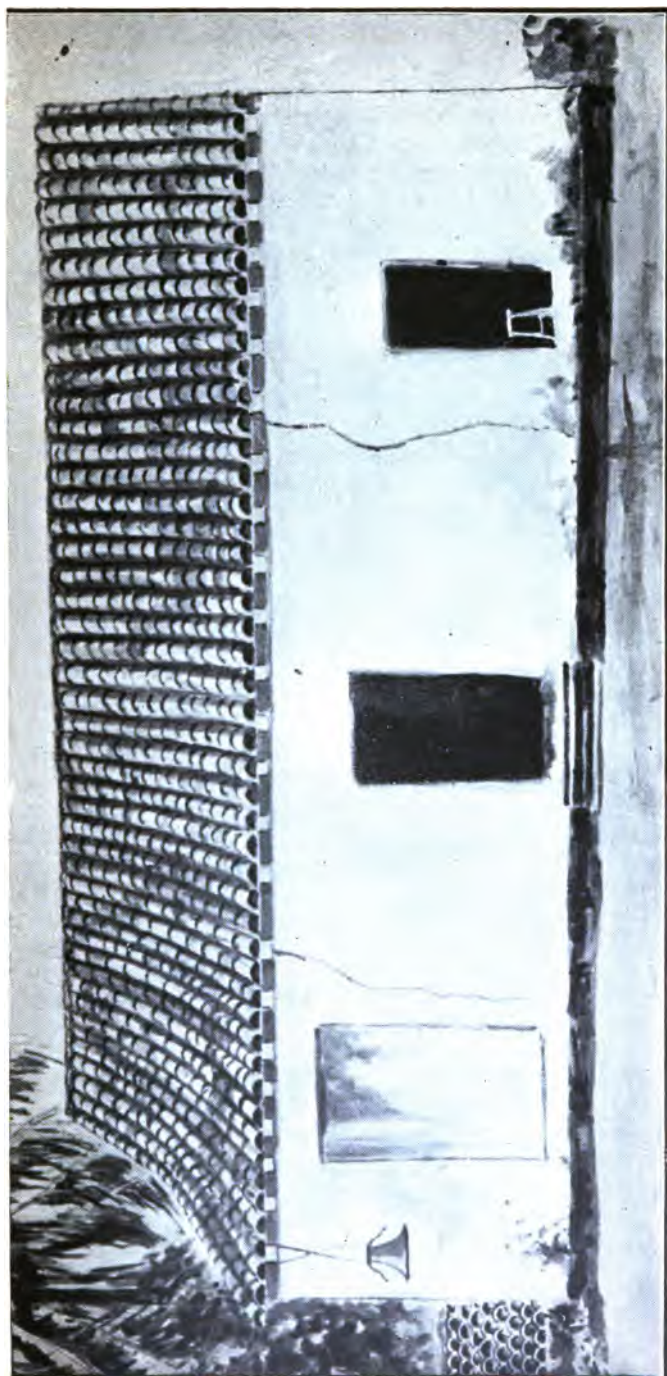
Envy, disguised as puritanism, has sought a means to belittle the great work accomplished by General Diaz.

"Ambition swayed him....." is the objection made by many, thinking that at last they have found a joint in his armour.

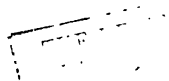
There can surely be no greater error than that of mistaking one of the lowest motives for the one which inspired a work, the result of which has been a distinct benefit to humanity.

It is useless to maintain that General Diaz gave ear to the whisperings of fame and greatness; but to condemn noble and legitimate aspirations is equivalent to condemning life itself; to do away with emulation would be to arrest all possibility of human progress, because the desire to excel has been the most powerful lever by which the world has continued its progress towards perfection. The civilization of the Greeks led them to worship those qualities which were the mainsprings of life, but they failed to distinguish the motive from the means employed and, therefore, their mythology was odious and despicable.

Modern philosophy, which is far more advanced than that of the Greeks, makes a distinction between the motive and the means employed, and there can be nothing more immoral than the well known maxim of the Jesuits, "The end justifies the means." On the contrary, there is a profound truth in the



House in which general Diaz lived at Tlacotalpam when he retired to private life and devoted himself to agriculture, after having rendered eminent services during the campaign against the french intervention and the so-called empire. The humble apperance of the mansion is the best proof of the modesty and honesty of the great chief who inhabited it.



saying that, "He who employes unworthy means, even though it be to attain great ends, will always be unworthy himself."

This is the standard by which the character and works of General Diaz should be judged.

That his life's work has been of the greatest benefit to his country, is beyond dispute. Therefore, all that remains to be done is to properly understand the motives which prompted his actions, and the means which he made use of in order to put them into effect.

Above all, let us discard objections which are as childish as they are unworthy.

"General Diaz could not see what the results would be....."

The great psycholocial forces of nature, like the physical ones, are hidden and unforeseen, and only oppose the object which at the moment impedes their action. For this reason, genius almost invariably follows a sudden and inexplicable inspiration; therefore, it is innocent of good or bad intentions and is incapable of forming carefully laid out plans for a future, which, of course, is hidden. On the contrary, it often happens that the spark of genius is kindled, but latent, in the breasts of those who are not even aware of its presence, until some event occurs in their lives which brings it into prominence,

The waves roll gently over the smooth bosom of the ocean, but when they meet a rock which impedes them they first break against it, but finally, by continuous action, wear it away.

The distinction between the sublime moral forces and those of nature consists in the will of man, who controls the former. Place a building under a waterfall and the results are disastrous; install a turbine and the same forces of destruction become useful and productive. The waterfall indifferently destroys or creates and, as a blind force of nature, can neither avoid destroying the house, nor moving the creative turbine. Not so, however, with the human mind which is gifted with a conscience to guide it, and a will power whereby the actions of the individual are exercised for good or evil, as the case may be. But the conscience does not exercise the same powers over the soul. For instance, inspiration, which in itself works wonders, is a thing apart from conscience, whilst prescience is both weak and liable to error, because it depends upon the conscience. This fact is exemplified in the words of the great Mexican philosopher: "Know in order to foresee, foresee in order to act." This is a great truth, because the works of genius are but rarely the result of foresight and premeditation. Mankind, therefore, is only able to do good or evil, to elevate or debase the mind; but man is powerless when it comes to

deciding this or that question in its details, when the outcome still lies in the future, and even less so when the nature of the question is complicated, for the simple reason that he is also powerless to foresee with any certainty the chain of circumstances, which might as easily lead to the desired end, as exceed it, and thus ruin everything. This truth, which is a painful one to admit, is briefly expressed in that apt saying: "Nothing actually happens as one expects or fears it will." Only mediocrities live and die in the forming of ideas which are never accomplished, because their powers are far below their aspirations. With great men the contrary occurs: action almost invariably follow upon the formation of an idea, and this is because the desire and the power to act in perfect poise. There is one thing certain; history does not contain one single instance in which beautiful ideals have ever elevated a country, when not supported by actions. This is why rulers and other great men should be judged by their acts and not by what they may have thought, which after all, will ever remain in the realms of supposition.

Consequently, if this absurd objection that "General Diaz could not foresee what the results would be," is looked at from a reasonable point of view, it is evident to all that no one was able, as far back as the years 1870, to peer into the future and form an idea of the results of the policy of those days upon our present times. To do so would be about as absurd as to say that the men of those times could prophesy the advent of quick firing guns, wireless telegraphy, long distance transmission of electric power, and all those many other modern improvements which have vitally shaped the destinies of the world, and the advantages of which we in Mexico now enjoy, thanks to the wise and able mind which has directed our affairs.

We will now into consideration another question which is even of a more serious nature: and that is, whether or not General Diaz was influenced by the dictates of ambition. Such a delicate question as this ought not to be decided by opinions, alone; it requires the substantiation of undisputed facts which cannot be denied. Without having to make any particular search, we are able to quote some of the most striking incidents in the life of the great Mexican ruler, characteristic of that noble patriotism and loftiness of purpose, associated with all his acts, and which prove that the question of personal interest never influenced him in any way.

In the first part of this volume, when describing the perseverance displayed by General Diaz, we mention the fact that, the first escape from Puebla, he offered his services to

President Juarez, who wished to give him the portfolio of Minister of War.

Anyone acquainted with the history of those times knows that to hold the position of Minister of War practically meant to hold the reins of government. Let the reader consider carefully the golden opportunities which such a proposal contained for a young man of thirty three years of age, who had no fortune of his own, and thus saw before him the means to wealth. Moreover, ill and exhausted as he was by the hardships of a long and arduous campaign, there was surely some excuse had he taken this opportunity for resting in a decorous manner. It must also be remembered that by dint of hard service all he had earned was the bare promotion to the rank of Brigadier General, and now the offer held out to him was the supreme command of the Army and precedence over the head of older officers, and finally, after having received no special distinctions, this, the most important government office, was offered to him.

Despite these facts, General Diaz brushed aside all considerations of personal gain, and only took into account that, on one hand, the appointment would arouse the jealousies of his fellow officers at such a period, and on the other, that his services would be of more use to his country on the field of battle than in the Cabinet. Therefore, without looking to the right or to the left, he took a position as subordinate to an incapable superior officer and gave up the alluring offer of the portfolio of Minister of War.

As we have already stated, throughout the long period of the War of Intervention, which was a series of unbroken triumphs for General Diaz, his fixed ideas and his most cherished hope, as all those who were with him at that time know, was to place the flag of the Republic in Juarez' hands, so that the latter might again hoist it over the National Palace in all its pristine honour and glory, free from all reproach or stain. With his customary conciseness, General Diaz speaks of this matter in the following way:

"I had a large flag made which was to be hoisted over the National Palace on the day on which the President made his triumphal entry, because he had told me in one of his letters during the war and at a time when he thought it would be almost impossible to again occupy the capital, that he hoped to again hoist the Mexican flag over that building, and remembering his enthusiastic expression I gave order that the flag should not be hoisted over the National Palace until President Juarez himself could do so. This ceremony took place on the 15th of July 1867, the day of his entry.

General Diaz had taken the city since the 21st of June.

It may be mentioned in this connection that the investiture of Juarez was keenly contested, on the grounds that it was not legal, by the ambitious General Gonzalez Ortega, who was supported by a large number of partisans. Shortly after this event Juarez lost a great deal of his prestige and popularity with a certain faction of the liberal party on account of his famous Edict, in which he brought forward a proposal, which was considered un-constitutional, for changing and reforming the Constitution of 1857 and in which he also proposed the rehabilitation of the catholic clergy in the use of certain political rights. In contrast, General Diaz, was then the popular hero, whom everyone feted and honoured, besides being spoken of as a candidate for the presidency of the Republic, or at least for the Cabinet. Moreover, he had at his disposition all the money he needed and commanded a well equipped and disciplined Army Corps, which was completely at his beck and call. There could, therefore, have been no more propitious moment for an ambitious man who was determined to sieze upon the supreme authority. What is even more striking: several of the generals in command came forward and made him more or less open offers of support.

In a recently published book, called "Aurora y Ocaso," whose author is not a particular partisan of President Diaz, there is a chapter entitled "Predestination," containing the following:

"El Ferrocarril," 7th May, 1872.

"General Diaz is not ambitious. If he were so, or had been so, Juarez would never have again held the Presidential chair in 1867. It is said that Diaz was invited by the Army, by Governors of States and many other influential people to re-assume the management of the Nation's affairs, and that Congress would call upon him to take up this responsibility. It is probable that some of the Governors did not speak well of Juarez; but Diaz, with extreme scrupulousness, refused all the flattering proposals which were made him, and evidence shows that he not only recommended obedience to Juarez, but even went so far as to recommend his election. Furthermore, he protected him with his prestige and popularity, without which it is more than doubtful if Don Benito would ever have returned to the Capital of the Republic as the Supreme head of the Executive."

"Who, therefore, can accuse General Diaz of harbouring ambitious and revolutionary schemes?"

As regards those motives which influenced General Diaz to take upon himself the heavy responsibility of the revolution

which had its commencement in the "Plan de la Noria," we now publish a letter, unfortunately but little known, in which he himself states his reasons. The explanations therein made, the sincerity of which might possibly have been doubted in those times, are today fully corroborated and substantiated by thirty years of peace, law and order, which in themselves are the most striking proofs of the patriotism and sincerity of the writer.

La Noria, January 20, 1871.

"To the Editors of the 'Mensajero.'

Esteemed friends:

I consider it my duty to express to you the high esteem in which I hold the honour you have shown me in proposing me for the Presidency of the Republic, by means of your paper.

My past, and even my present position, authorizes me, without being suspected of affectation, to state my preference for a private life, provided my wishes in this respect are not contrary to the duties incumbent upon all citizens to serve their country in whatever capacity they may be assigned to.

Whilst accepting, therefore, the support given me by yourselves and other organs of the National Press, permit me to say that I do so in obedience to what I believe to be my duty, and not from any impulse to change my present conditions, with which I am entirely satisfied.

I gave my acceptance, when in the Capital, to the delegates of the Democratic and Constitutional Association, among whom were some of the Editors of the 'Mensajero,' when they submitted to me for my approval the political plan, which you later on adopted, which I at that time accepted, and to which I am prepared to adhere.

The principles therein contained, if adhered to by a proper administration, cannot but fail to benefit our country.

A government which, freed from the spirit of exclusiveness, puts an end to all questions of a merely political nature which have uselessly embroiled the nation; places the common interests of the country before private and party interests, and which with the solid advantages of order and peace devotes itself to complying with our first requirement, the reorganization of our government, cannot but fail to inspire confidence and tide over a crisis which for some time past has prevented the Republic from advancing.

The difficulties which oppose this desired end are by no means few, but a firm and sincere intention may lessen them.

To attain this ideal, it is worth while making some sacrifices, and I am resolved to make the first, and bear with the evil insinuations of those who wish to misconstrue my intentions.

Those who really wish to bring about the lasting benefits of peace have honoured me by their support and in return I shall highly admire them for not accentuating the difficulties which lie before us by party rancours and discord, but on the contrary substitute their personal feelings by moderation and true patriotism.

I shall take advantage of such opportunities as the present one to beg the press and those associations which have proposed me as a candidate for the presidency, to make every endeavour to influence their electoral campaign by reasonable and worthy efforts, by conforming to the free will of the people, rather than by misleading them.

I am, Sirs,

Yours faithfully,

PORFIRIO DIAZ."

Respect for the will of the people, even though it should be adverse, is so sincere in General Diaz, that some years later, when convinced that for the time being public opinion favoured Lerdo de Tejada, he immediately addressed from Chihuahua the following communication to the Commander in Chief of the Western Division of the army in the field, and against which he was arrayed with the popular constitutional army, then strong and in an excellent position:

"I duly received your communication dated the 2nd inst., in which you are kind enough to transmit a telegram from the Minister of War, as to the manner in which I should place the troops under my command at the orders of the Government. I did not care to reply immediately, as you desired, without first consulting with my officers, so as to be able to act in accordance with them.

Yesterday evening I reached this city and the same night called a meeting of the superior officers in order to make known to them your communication. On being apprised of the same, they unanimously agreed to put an end to the war at any cost, in order to avoid the disastrous consequences which would attend a prolongation of hostilities, and though they consider their dignity lowered in accepting the amnesty proclaimed by the interim President of the Republic in his decree of July 27th last, they willingly make this sacrifice for the sake of peace and in the hope that they will thus contribute greatly to the welfare of the country."

One of the reasons which acquits General Diaz from even the most remote suspicion of having acted with ambitious views upon deciding to head the Tuxtepec movement, was the fact that when he assumed the responsibility of the revolution, his first act was to reform at Palo Blanco the "Plan" drawn up by

General Fidencio Hernandez, making it a condition that if his party triumphed, the Presidency of the Republic should devolve upon Licenciado José Mara Iglesias, who was legally entitled to that office on account of being the Supreme Judge of the High Court, until the regular presidential elections were held.

The intrigues which took place between Iglesias and General Alatorre and their dictatorial plans, gave affairs an entirely different aspect, which has fortunately, however, worked out for the ultimate welfare of the country.

In the light of those convincing proofs there can be no doubt that if General Diaz accepted the popular invitation to rule the country and laboured to carry out the national ideals, it was not for ambition, but in response to the dictates of his conscience and to fulfill a noble and patriotic aspiration, which nowadays it would be the height of gratitude to deny. It is true that he wished to be the ruler of the nation, but only in the character of a lawful and respected head of a strong and prosperous country, and the logical outcome of this aspiration was the aggrandizement of the nation and the unity of all Mexicans, to which work he devoted all the powers of his political genius and lofty character.

This same identity of interests of a ruler with his people is the cause for the rise of nations, or their dismemberment where such conditions do not exist. Therefore, under the rule of Santa Anna, Mexico corrupt and despicable, was humiliated among the nations. Under General Diaz, she rose to her proper place among the powers, as a nation which was honourable, strong and respected.

HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY.

As we already know the political causes which were ruining the country, and having explained the principal methods used by General Diaz in order to remove them, according to his sensible views and high ideals, we now propose to make a synthesis of his work of administration during the last three decades, because it would be impossible for us to present them to our readers in as complete a form as we would like to. We will, therefore, only refer to some of those most striking instances in which General Diaz brought about the pacification of the country and succeeded in reorganizing and developing national resources, partly through his freedom from traditional prejudices, his thorough knowledge of the needs of the Mexican people, and the importance and future of the natural resources of the country; partly on account of his genuine abilities as a statesman of an admirably human, practical and persevering character, who preferred facts to theories, and, be-

cause, instead of attempting to overcome an insuperable obstacle he knew how to get around it; because he disdained to split hairs, but always went to the bottom of a question; because he never hesitated in moments of danger, nor lost an opportunity, and, finally, because he believed sincerely that the effect of hard work, combined with honesty of purpose and perseverance was strong enough to move mountains.

When General Diaz took up the reins of government for the first time he was confronted with the difficult task of sundering that chain of errors which bound the nation down, a task which had been beyond his predecessors and had baffled both Mexican and foreigner alike. He had to do this, or perish with the Republic, which had reached the limits of its resistance.

The problem was simple enough to understand. There was no peace because there was no money, and no money because there was no peace.

In order to put an end to this absurd situation, General Diaz employed a great diversity of methods, which were required in order to cope with the formidable array of secondary issues which were disturbing the country and which might briefly be summed up in that famous phrase of Shakespeare's Danish Prince: "To be or not to be." In this gigantic and superhuman task General Diaz, day by day, found it necessary to rely upon his strength of character and keen intelligence. For this reason it will be seen that the pacification and aggrandizement of Mexico was essentially a personal work in the highest degree.

Consequently, the corner stones to the work, given the actual conditions of the country at that time, was the personal prestige of the man who undertook it. With this in his favour, the rest was comparatively easy.

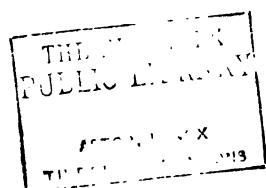
And so it came to pass that the first and most efficacious means of pacification employed by General Diaz was his personal prestige, and more especially his spotless reputation for honest dealing, earned during long years of irreproachable administration, from the time in which he rendered to his superiors detailed accounts of his work as sub-prefect of Ixtlan, to that in which, as Commander in Chief of the Third Army of the East, he turned over to the government a large sum of money, which no one expected, nor believed that it would have existed in the coffers of his army.

But this was not the only manner in which his honesty increased his prestige. Other instances of his rectitude and conscientiousness—virtues rare enough in those times—won for him, to an even greater extent, the esteem and confidence of the public. There have been many rulers in Mexico who never



General Diaz as he looks actually

He is wearing the tricolor band crossing his breast, the only insignia of his high rank. With this democratic and severe dress he attends all the state occasions of a civil character, especially when he delivers his annual message before the chambers of the legislative power.



stooped to appropriate national money and who even served their country without remuneration, but the personal honesty of a ruler is a negative and insufficient virtue when limited to not transgressing for personal gain himself, whilst allowing others to do so. The Mexican people had ample experience in this respect, and consequently relied but little upon the integrity of the law courts, nor the honesty of rulers whose agents and subordinates were guilty of the most outrageous infractions in the name of justice. In contrast, General Diaz' reputation was based upon the fact that, apart from his absolute honesty in handling public funds, he compelled his subordinates to observe the same scrupulousness. A proof of this is evidenced in the fact that as Captain, Commander, Colonel or General, during the many campaigns he went through, he never permitted the troops under him to indulge in excesses of any kind whatsoever and, as their superior officer, taught them to respect the property of others as something sacred and inviolate. The inhabitants of the towns he marched through or occupied during his active military career knew and appreciated this conduct and repaid him by their loyal support and cooperation.

That such should have been the case is only natural, because General Diaz has always been solicitous for the public welfare and has sought to relieve the people of all unnecessary and unjust burdens.

Among other instances, we will quote the following: when it was proposed to contract the first loan, he made the preliminary steps in the matter himself personally and then sent Don Delfin Sanchez to Europe for the purpose of sounding the big banking houses and obtaining from them exact information as to the best terms in which the business could be transacted. Shortly afterwards the Finance Minister, Don Manuel Dublan, who had also taken up the matter, informed him that he was in receipt of offers from various powerful banking institutions and was prepared to submit the proposals which had been made to him. This he did, but the Minister's figures and those obtained by General Diaz, proved that the acceptance of the former's estimates would have meant a serious loss.

This important question was fully discussed at a meeting of the Cabinet Ministers and, after hearing the opinions of all those present, the President laid before them the advantageous proposals that had been made him. Upon hearing of these, Minister Dublan asked, if he should be able to obtain similar terms, whether he could accept them, to which the President replied affirmatively.

Shortly after this meeting the Finance Minister reported that he had arranged for the loan with the house of Bleichroeder under the same favourable conditions which General Diaz had submitted.

General Diaz, with his characteristic patriotism and energy, was thus instrumental in saving the Nation a considerable sum of money.

The great majority of our former rulers instead of reorganizing and consolidating the finances of the country out of the ruins in which they had been left during the viceregal times, only succeeded in accentuating the chaos which already existed and which lasted for half a century subsequent to colonial times. Some placed a childish faith in the legendary wealth of our natural resources, others were guilty of undeniable bad faith, many were governed by force of circumstances, more by ignorance, and not a few were influenced by all these causes together. The result was that finances of the country were at the lowest ebb, due to thriftlessness, dishonesty and a state of insolvency which had completely destroyed national credit.

To give a clearer idea of the condition of our finances during that period, it is sufficient to say that for over fifty years the accounts related with public funds were in the most deplorable state of confusion, and in fact most of the time had not been kept at all. The rulers of those days, deeply immersed in the problems of maintaining their powers and in opposing those of their adversaries, could not be troubled with accounts, they did not ask for them nor submit them to Congress, perhaps because they wished to avoid a true comprehension of existing conditions.

To this appalling state of affairs, must be added the further climax that each successive president who fought his way to power, refused to recognize the debts and obligations incurred by the government which preceded him, and in his turn did not hesitate to make further loans, which were again repudiated by his successor.

It is sufficient to say that the Nation did not pay its debts in order to realize why it had no credit.

It would not have been quite so bad if all the debts which were repudiated or left unpaid during that long period of anarchy following upon the reestablishment of the Republic had been of the kind which were contracted during the Intervention, as the nullity of those obligations have been recognized by both foreigners as well as Mexicans; but there were others, which if from the standpoint of the Liberal Party were not binding, because they had been contracted by the leaders of the opposition, for the foreigners who had made them, in

good faith, they were certainly valid and binding. Consequently, upon finding that they were not paid, they threw the responsibility upon the country as they were not in a position to make fine distinctions between the lawful and actual authorities, nor for that matter were they obliged to understand the situation, particularly as in a great majority of cases the money had been obtained from them by means of forced loans.

We do not wish to dispute the right of the legally constituted government in refusing to honour debts contracted by the revolutionists or declining to make compensation for damages they had caused. We mention this question as it clearly shows how in those times facts were made subordinate to arguments. It is true that in disclaiming these obligations the Republic was perfectly within its rights, because it is evident that it was not obliged to pay for what it did not owe. Its sense of justice and dignity could not, therefore, be accused. However, both foreign and native capitalists could not bring themselves to view matters in this light and, consequently, refused to have anything further to do with the Mexican Government in a business sense with the practical result that the Nation was completely discredited, despite the fact that the right was on its side.

Only the high reputation of General Diaz proved to be sufficient guarantee for capital, which is the most timid and apprehensive element possible. The prestige of his character alone was the factor which decided capitalists to again risk their money in local enterprises.

For this reason alone, besides other equally weighty ones which are not pertinent to the question, the objections which were raised to the liquidation and acknowledgment of Mexican debts, were all so much pseudo-patriotic froth lacking in common sense. Supposing we had paid more than what we were strictly obliged to do, we would never have done as much as General Diaz did in acknowledging those National debts which were contracted under proper conditions, by which means he reestablished the credit of Mexico, apparently ruined beyond redemption and thereby earned a compensation in increased revenues for the future.

However, the restoration of our foreign credit could not be brought about by merely recognizing our debts. It was indispensable to comply with our obligations also. Besides this, it was absolutely necessary to guarantee liberty of work, personal safety and respect for property.

As regards the acknowledgment of debts, former governments were only too ready to contract obligations and promise to meet them without any possibility of their complying with

their obligations, until affairs reached such a stage that no one would entertain the idea of lending the Nation a single cent, nor were our protestations taken seriously. This is why the personal prestige of General Diaz was essential in order to guarantee the first promise of payment which was made by him in the name of the Nation. The confidence placed in him by men of business and enterprise, induced them to abandon the business of war and devote their energies and capital to other and more peaceful pursuits which were destined to bring about the prosperity and welfare of the people. Even this would not have been done had they not been perfectly satisfied of the fact that General Diaz, even in war time had been exceedingly careful not to prejudice the interests of the peaceful inhabitants of the country.

HOW THE FINANCIAL PROBLEM WAS SOLVED.

In its economy, which is the basis of everything, the plan prepared and carried out by General Diaz may briefly be summed up as follows: to organize and elevate the administration of public funds; to encourage and stimulate existing, but weakened, industries and to create new ones; not to promise impossibilities, and, finally, to sacredly live up to obligations which had been accepted. This is an easy programme to outline, but a difficult one to carry into effect. Let us see how the author put it into practice.

He definitely and resolutely adopted a system of concentrating all accounts and keeping the books by double entry, a matter which had been a cause for discussion by the Finance Ministers of the country during half a century, in which time they had not found out, or perhaps did not want to find out, that this was the only means of keeping a record of the pilfering, wastefulness, errors and misuse of the national wealth—a miserable pittance, indeed—of the nation in those days.

Those who know mankind will realize that work of making government officials of the old school render honest and straightforward accounts of their management was bound to arouse their animosity and stir up further discord. It should be remembered that it is a peculiarity of the Mexican character to look at things from an optimistic point of view, and to this fact must be added another consideration: the corrupt traditions of the colonial epoch, had left behind it the scourge of officialism, perhaps one of the most obnoxious features which we had inherited from the Conquerors, and as a consequence the great majority of our fiscal employes considered that they held office merely for the purpose of making the most they

could and not for the purpose of honestly collecting the revenues for the national good. Moreover, many governors though it was an entirely justifiable means of maintaining their influence and increasing their revenues, by selling the positions in the Finance Department to those who could afford to pay for the privilege, regardless as to whether they were fitted for the position or not.

Therefore, the establishment of a proper system of accounts for the revenues and a careful selection of honest officials, may be considered to have been the main factors in the economic regeneration of Mexico. This same system which now governs all departments, enables the Minister to keep a perfect record of all transactions by means of proper books, and to at once ascertain by telegraph the financial conditions of any particular section of the country. The natural outcome of this system of administration has been the elimination of a former type of incapable and corrupt officialdom, characteristic of colonial times, which is now practically extinct.

The second part of the programme, the development of existing sources of wealth and the creation of new ones, was planned and carried out in an equally systematic manner.

Three factors were absolutely indispensable in order to bring about the development of the vast natural resources of the country: peace, capital and means of communication. The first two put an end to that enervating corruption which no one up to that moment had been able to eradicate; the third was that "unknown quantity" which General Diaz brought into existence, guided by his common sense and his knowledge of the Mexican people and faith in their future. These reasons decided him to sign a contract of subvention to the first international railway to be built in our country, without having the resources wherewith to meet it, but with the confidence that railway communications would remove the possibility of civil war and encourage industries.

His far sighted policy proved correct, as thanks to his decisiveness in undertaking what appeared to be an impossible obligation, we have been enabled since then to contract and comply with others involving millions of dollars, which are today invested in railways, telegraphs and other modern improvements, which have developed the wonderful resources of the country and guaranteed the maintenance of peace and order.

The result of these modern improvements and rapid means of communication has been to bring the people more closely together, and the idea of a Federation has become an actual reality instead of a theoretical problem based upon laws alone.

The puerile maxim "Between weakness and Strength, the

Desert," which is attributed to President Lerdo is offset by the manly words of General Diaz, "In order to be fearless in the face of a foreign power, we must be strong. Unity and wealth gives strength; isolation weakens and impoverishes; therefore, let us efface all deserts from our maps."

This is the manner in which this great Mexican has drawn to him the good will of all worthy men, and, who besides uniting the inhabitants of all parts of the country, has opened the ports of Salina Cruz and Puerto Mexico to the world and thus enabled the peoples of two continents to come into closer contact. For General Diaz was reserved the glory of overcoming that obstacle which shattered the hopes of Columbus, when in vain he searched for an opening which would lead to the Indies. Four centuries rolled by before the leader of that conquered country found the outlet which the Genovese navigator had seached for in vain.

However, General Diaz had yet to meet with serious obstacles before his task could be completed, among these being the question of finances which had to be reorganized upon his again being elected to the presidency in succession to General Gonzalez.

It may be said that the situation at that time, if not desperate, was at least more complex than ever, because larger interests were then at stake. But the extraordinary genius of General Diaz was equal to the occasion. Throughout the trying decade from 1884 to 1894, his management of affairs was such that he was able to recoup all losses, straighten out public questions and satisfactorily established the national credit. At the end of the decade Mexico had passed triumphantly through a crisis, all danger had disappeared and all that remained to be done was to perfect the work.

We have briefly outlined the fundamental causes which led up to the economic regeneration of the country, upon which rests the present prosperity of the nation and the best promise for the future.

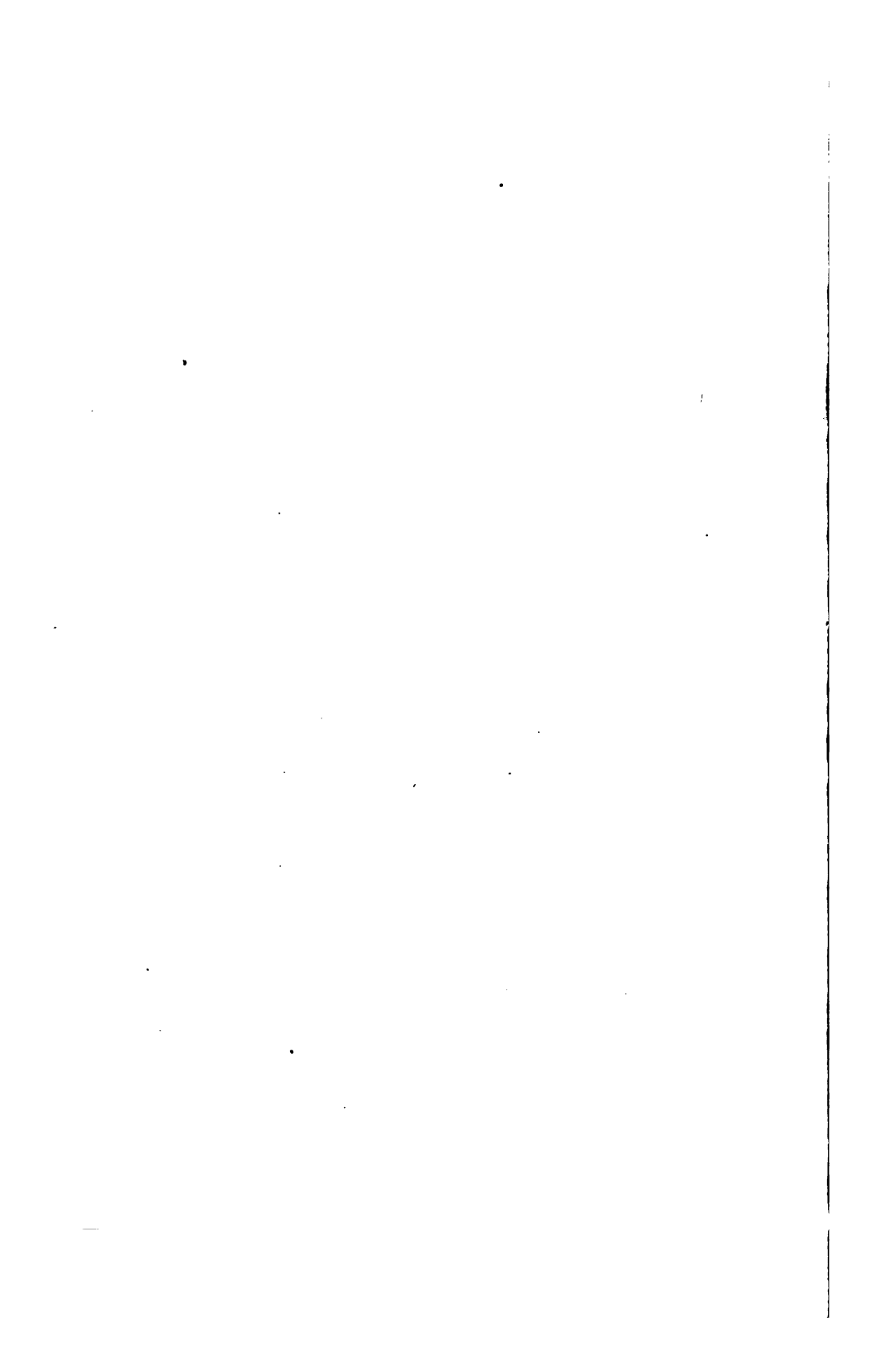
The salient and most admirable features in General Diaz' policy, which are the best guarantees for peace, have been:

Wise and thorough methods of reform and an equitable distribution and decrease in taxation; a complete, definite and advantageous liquidation and adjustment of the public debt; order and honesty in the management of national revenues; adjustment of receipts and expenses, which latter in the seventies hardly reached fourteen million dollars, but now exceed one hundred million; and the creation of a reserve fund, which can be realized at any moment, of over seventy million dollars.

Such are, in brief, the ideals which inspired the political work of General Diaz, and the solid principles upon which they are based.

But upon all Mexicans devolves the patriotic and grateful duty of maintaining this work and being worthy of it.

Mexico, September, 1907





Great decoration of the Military Merit created by decree of the National Representation in recognizance of the many and valuable services rendered by General Díaz as a soldier and especially by the organisation of the Mexican Army.—Tricolor Band, the only insignia of the range of President of the Republic.—Cross of Constanca of the first class.

At the bottom of the cut is a grup of miniature reproductions of the principal decorations inpossession of General Díaz, made especialy in order he can wear them all together.

7. 11. 1941



Especial decoration as recompense by the assault and surrender of Puebla the 2nd. of April 1867.—Cross of first class as recompense for the campaign against the french intervention and the so-called empire.—Cross created by the State of Yucatan as recompense by the campaign against the Maya rebels.—Cross by the defense of Puebla in the year 1863.—The insignia accompanying this decoration is at the lower part in the left side of the cut.—Medals of honor: from the State of Guerrero for the campaign against the intervention.—For the battle of the "Fifth of May 1862."—For the defense of the Acultzingo hill in April of same year.—From the State of Oaxaca for the battles of Miahuatlan and la Carbonera and for the taking of the city of Oaxaca.—For the battle of Pachuca in the year 1861.—From the State of Puebla: for the campaign against the Empire.—Insignia of the Cross of Constancia of the first clas.

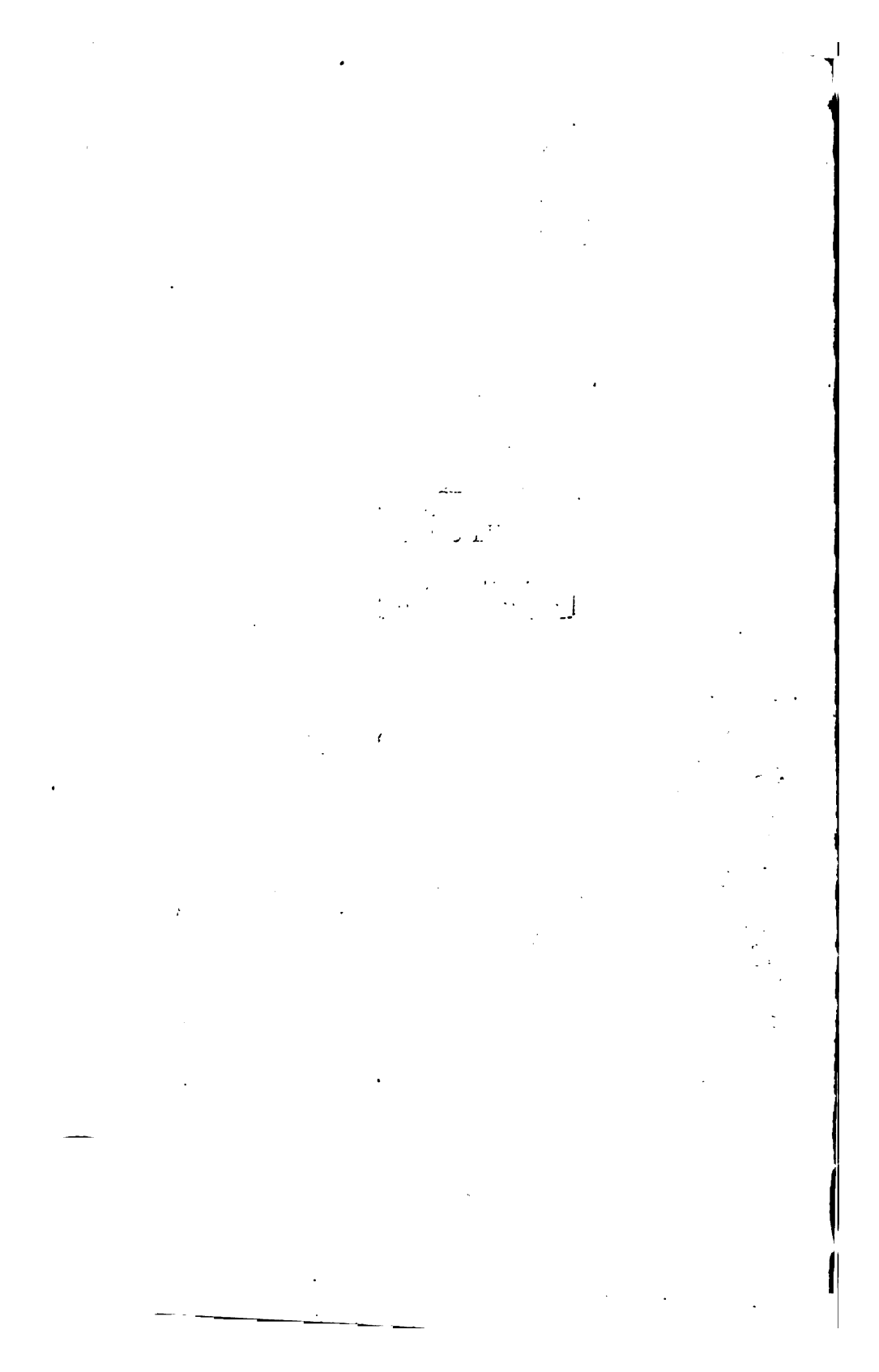
Besides these, president Diaz has one other decoration for the Reforma campaign, and many honorific medals and diplomas both national an foreing, civil and military.

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Gran Cordon and insignia of the Order of the Legion d'Honneur, conferred by the government of France.—Grand Cross and insignia of the Order of Saint Etienne of Hungary conferred by H. A. M. the Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary Francis Joseph, elder brother of Archduke Maximilian.—Grand Cross and insignia of the Order of Leopold of Belgium, conferred by H. M. King Leopold II of Belgium, brother of Archduchess Carlota, wife of Maximilian.

These three decorations have exceptional signification. That of the Legion d'Honneur was accorded as honorific distinction in spite of General Diaz having fought against the French Army.





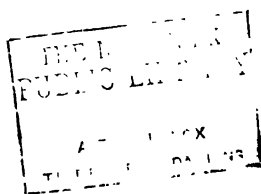
Grand Cordon of the Red Eagle of Prusia conferred by H. I. and R. M. William II, King of Prusia and Emperor of Germany.

Grand Cross, collar and insignia of the Order of the Bath, conferred by H. M. Edouard VII, King of Great Britain and Emperor of India.

Grand Cross of the Order of the Sword, conferred by H. M. Oscar II, King of Sweden.



Grand Cross and insignia of the Order of Charles III of Spain.—Grand Cross and insignia of the Military Merit from the same contry.—Grand Cross and insignia of the Order of the Tower, from Portugal.

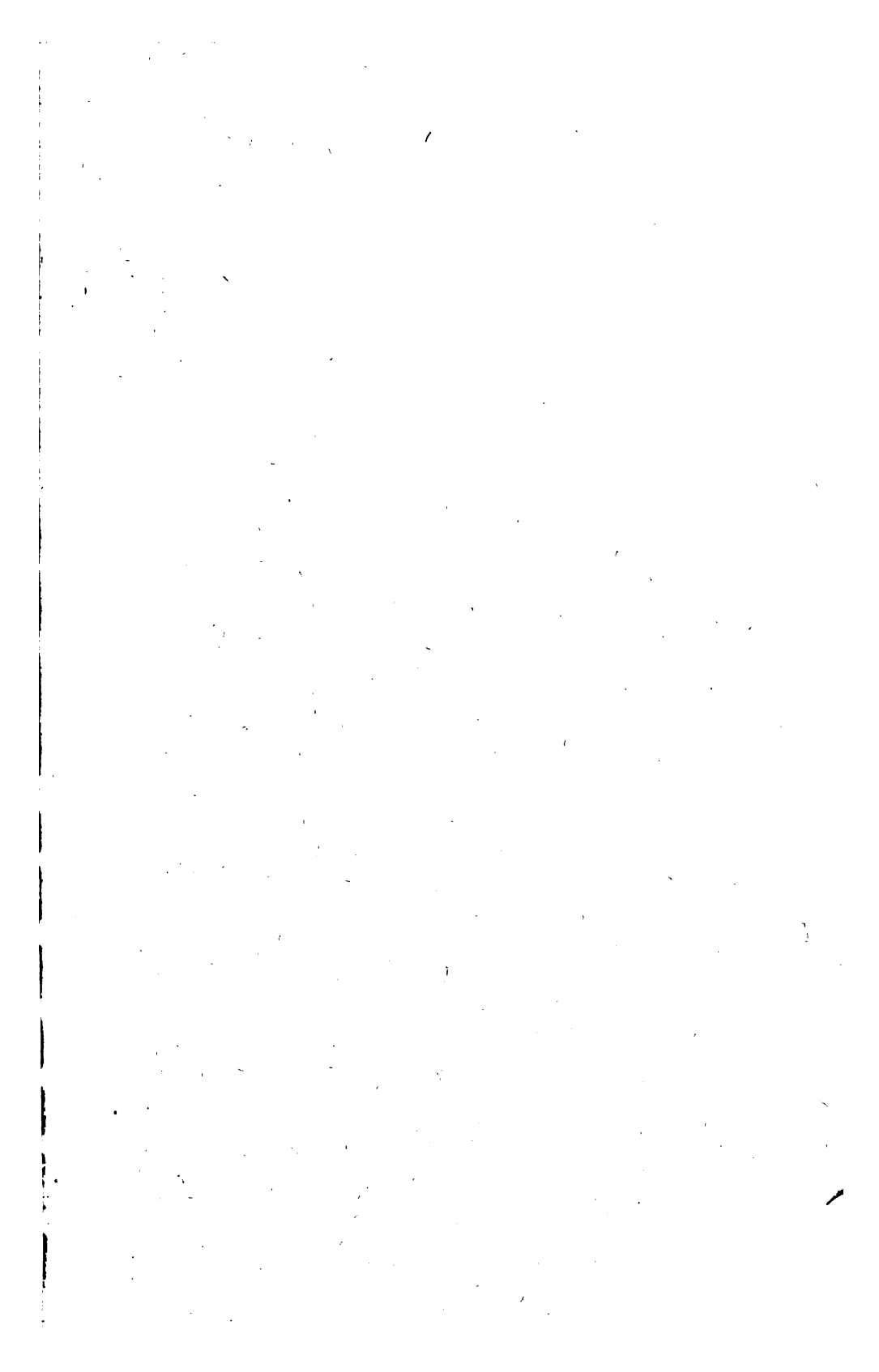




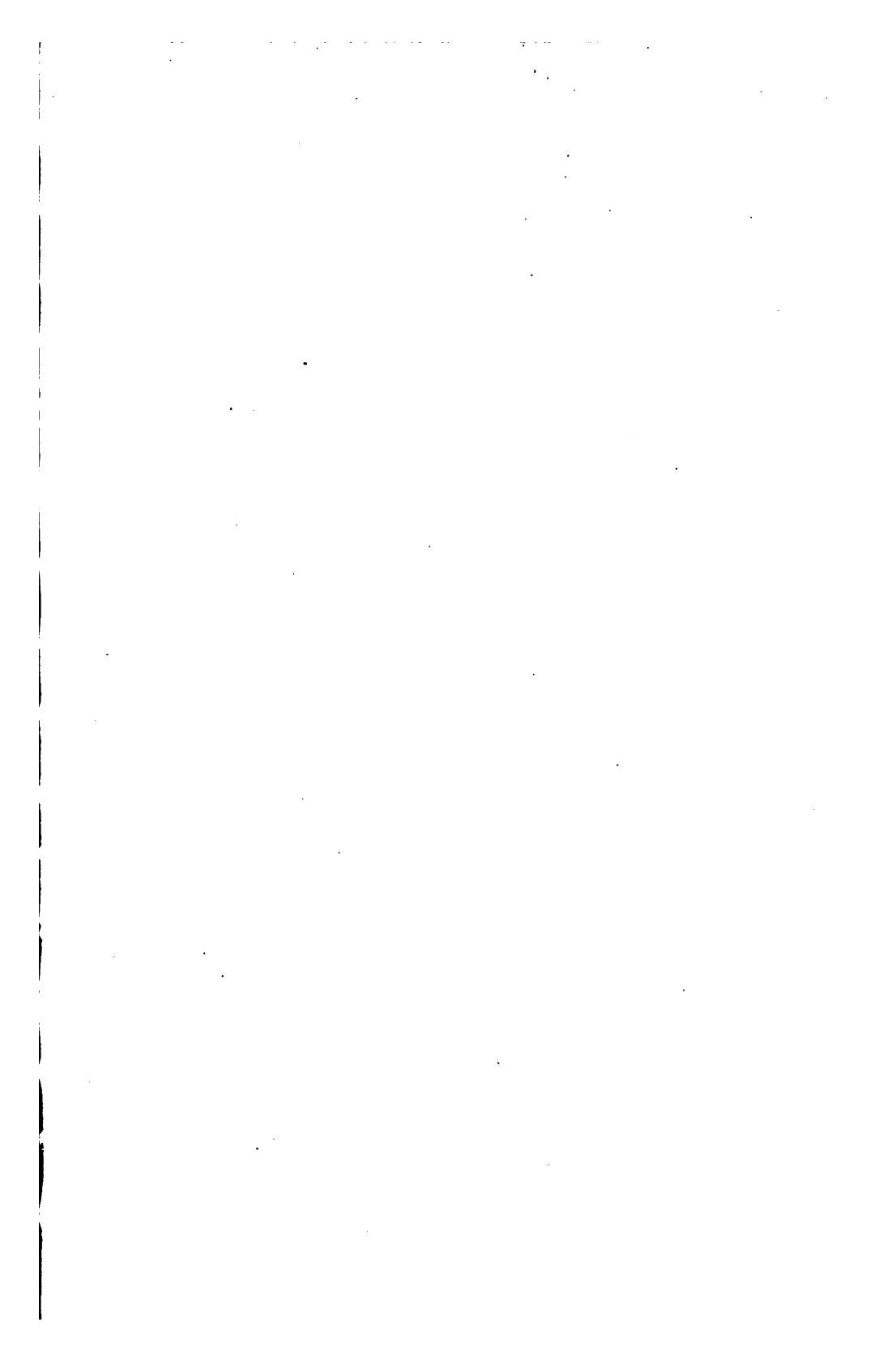
Grand Cross of the order of Saint Maurice and Saint Lazare of Savoie, conferred by H. M. the King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy.
Decorations of the first class of the Order of the Liberator of Venezuela, conferred by decree of the Congress of said Republic.

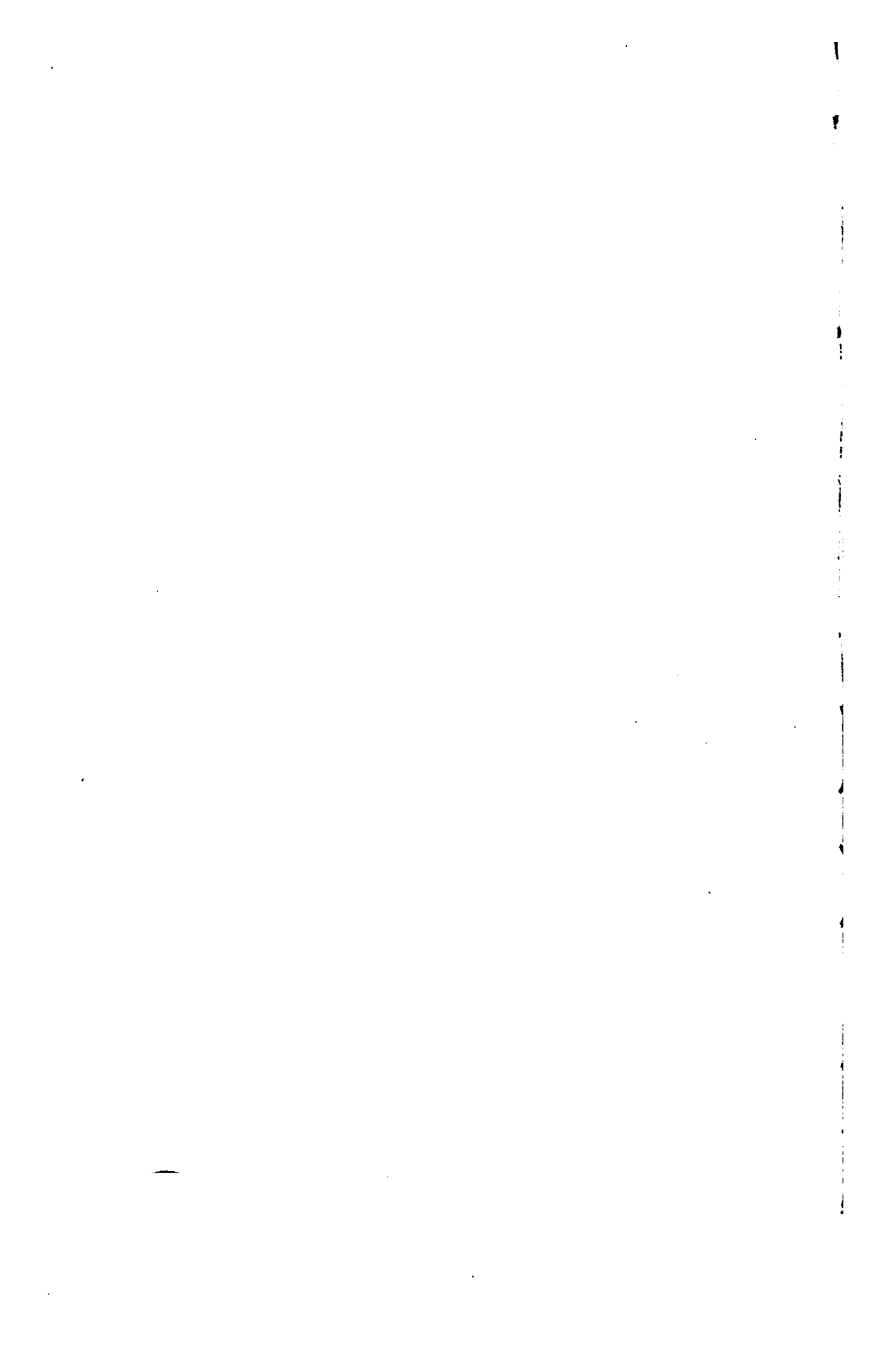


Grand Cross of the Order of the Lion and the Sun, of Persia; conferred by H. M.
 the late Shah of Persia.
 Grand Cross of the order of the Crisantemum of Japan.
 Grand Cross of the Order of the Dragon of China.



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